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Volume Five

Songs of the American Seas

San Francisco
The Whitaker & Ray Company
1909

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TO
MY PARENTS
HULINGS
AND MARGARET WITT MILLER

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A SONG OF CREATION

A SONG OF CREATION

The bravest, manliest man is he
Who braves the brede, who breaks the sod,
Who sows a seed, who plants a tree,
Who turns and tears the barren clod,
In partnership with God is he—
Himself a very part of God,
Aye, God's annointed, God's high priest.
And he who sees, who knows to see
As saw the eager seers of old,
Is of the "wise men of the East,"
Is richer than all Araby
In incense, myrrh and gifts of gold.

The noblest woman, bravest, best
Of all brave souls beneath the sun?
I say the queenliest is that one—
Seek north or south or east or west—
Who loves to fold the little frock
And hear the cradle rock and rock.
I say the purest woman, best
Beneath our forty stars, is she
Who loves her spouse most ardently
And rocks the cradle oftenest—
Who rocks and sings and rocks, and then,
When birds are nesting, rocks again.

CANTO I

I

A yucca crowned in creamy bloom,
A yucca freighted with perfume,
Breathed fragrance up the blossomed steep;
The warm sea winds lay half asleep,
Lay drowsing in the dreamy wold
By Saint Francisco's tawny Bay,
As if to fold, forever fold,
Worn, wearied wings and rest alway
In careless, languid Arcady.

II

Some clean, lean Eucalyptus trees,
Wind-torn and tossing to the blue,
Kept ward above the silent two
Who sat the fragrant sundown seas
Above the sounding Golden Gate
Nor questioned overmuch of fate;
For she was dowered, gold on gold,
With wealth of face and form untold!
And he was proud and passionate.

III

Ten thousand miles of mobile sea—
This sea of all seas blent as one
Wide, unbound book of mystery,
Of awe, of sibyl prophecy,
Ere yet a ghost or misty ken
Of God's far, first Beginning when

Vast darkness lay upon the deep;
As when God's spirit moved upon
Such waters cradled in such sleep
Such night as never yet knew dawn,
Such night as weird atallaph weaves
But never mortal man conceives.

IV

He looked to heaven, God; but she
Saw only his face and the sea.
He said—his fond face leaned to hers,
The warmest of God's worshipers—
"In the beginning? Where and when,
Before the fashioning of men,
Swung first His high lamps to and fro,
To light us as we please to go?
And where the waters, dark deeps when
God spake, and said, 'Let there be light'?
They still house where they housed, as then,
Dark curtained with majestic night—
Dusk Silence, in travail of Light
That knew not man or man's, at all—
Steel battle-ship or wood-built wall.

V

"Aye, these, these were the waters when
God spake and knew His fair first-born—
That silent, new-born baby morn,
Such eons ere the noise of men.
His Southern Cross, high-built about
The deep, set in a town of stars,
Commemorates, forbids a doubt

That here first fell God's golden bars—
Red bars, with soft, white silver blent,
Broad sown from sapphire firmament.

VI

"Behold what wave-lights leap and run
Swift up the shale from out the sea
Inwove with silver, gold and sun!
Light lingers in the tawny mane
Of wild oats waving lazily
Far upon the climbing poppy plain;
Far up yon steeps of dusk and dawn—
Black night, white light, inwound as one.
But when, when fell that far, first dawn
With ways of gold to walk upon?

VII

"I know not when, but only know
That darkness lay upon yon deep,
Lay cradled, as a child asleep,
And that God's spirit moved upon
These waters ere the burst of dawn
When first His high lamps to and fro
Swung forth to guide which way to go.

VIII

"I only know that Silence keeps
High court forever still hereon,
That Silence lords alone these deeps,
The silence of God's house, and keeps

Inviolate yon water's face.
As if still His abiding place,
As ere that far, first burst of dawn
Ere fretful man set sail upon.

IX

"The deeps," he mused, "are still as when
Dusk Silence kept her curtained bed
Low moaning for the birth of dawn,
When she should push black night aside,
As some ghoul nightmare most abhorred—
When she might laughing look upon
God's first-born glory, holy Light—
As when fond Eve exulting cried,
In mother-pain, with mother-pride,
'Behold the fair first-born of men!
I gat a man-child of the Lord!'"

X

As one discerning some sweet nook
Of wild oats, mantling yellow, pink,
Will pass, then turn and turn to look,
Then pass again to think and think,
Then try to not turn back again,
But try and try to quite forget
And, sighing, try and try in vain;
So you would turn and turn again
To her, her girlish woman's grace—
Full-flowered yet fond baby's face.

XI

Her wide, sweet mouth, an opened rose,
Pushed out, reached out, as if to kiss;
A mobile mouth in proud repose
This moment, then unlike to this
As storm to calm, as day to night,
As sullen darkness to swift light;
This new-made woman was, the sun
And surged sea interwound in one.

XII

Her proud and ample lips pushed out
As kissing sea-winds unaware;
And then they arched in angry pout,
As if she cared yet did not care.
Then lightning lit her great, wide eyes,
As if black thunder walled the skies,
And all things took some touch of her,
The while she stood nor deigned to stir:
The while she saw with vision dim—
Saw all things, yet saw only him.

XIII

Such eyes as compass all the skies,
That see all things yet naught have seen;
Such eyes of love or sorrow's eyes—
A martyr or a Magdalene?
How sad that all great souls are sad!
How sad that gladness is not glad—
That Love's sad sister is sweet Pain,
That only lips of beauty drain

Life's full-brimmed, glittering goblet dry,
And only drain the cup to die!

XIV

The yellow of her poppy hair
Was as red gold is, when at rest;
But when aroused was as the west
In sunset flame and then—take care!
Her tall, free-fashioned, supple form
Was now some sudden, tropic storm,
Was now some lily leaned at play.
What sea and sun, sunshine and shower,
Full flowered ere the noon of day,
Full June ere yet the morn of May,
This sun-born blossom of an hour—
Precocious Californian flower!

XV

She answered not but looked away
With brown hand arched above her brow,—
As peers a boatman from his prow, —
To where white sea-doves wheeled at play.
She watched them long, then turned and sighed
And looking in his face she cried,
While blushing prettily, "Behold,
There is no mateless dove, not one!
And see! not one unhappy dove.
Ten thousand circling in the sun,
Entangled as the mesh of fate,
Yet each remains as true as gold
And constant courts his pretty mate.
See here! See there! Behold, above—

I think each dove would die for love."
He watched the shallows spume the shore
And fleck the shelly, drifting shale,
Then far at sea his swift eyes swept
Where one tall, stately, snow-white sail
Its silent course majestic kept
And gloried in its alien mood,
As his own soul in solitude.

XVI

"The shallows murmur and complain,
The shallows turn with wind and tide,
They fringe with froth and moil the main;
They wail and will not be denied—
Poor, puny babes, unsatisfied!

XVII

"The lighthouse clings her beetling steep
Above the rock-sown, ragged shore
Where Scylla and Charybdis roar
And dangers lurk and shallows keep
Mad tumult in the house of sleep.
The shallows moan and moan alway—
The deeps have not one word to say.

XVIII

"I reckon Silence as a grace
That was ere light had name or place;
A saint enshrined ere hand was laid
To fashioning of man or maid.
For, storm or calm, or sun or shade,

Fair Silence never truth betrayed;
For, ocean deep or dappled sky,
Saint Silence never told a lie."

CANTO II

I

From out the surge of Sutro's steep,
Beyond the Gate a rock uprears,
So sudden, savage, unawares
The very billows start and leap,
As frightened at its lifted face,
So shoreless, sealess, out of place:
A sea-washed, surge-locked isle, as lone
As lorn Napoleon on his throne—
His Saint Helena throne, where still
The dazed world in dumb wonder turns
To his high throned, imperious will
And incense burns and ever burns.
Here huge sea-lions climb and cling,
Despite the surge and sethe and shock,
The topmost limit of the rock,
And one is named Napoleon, king.
Behold him lord the land, the sea,
In lone, unquestioned majesty!

II

She saw, she raised alert her head
With eager face and cheery said:
"What lusty, upheaved, bull-built neck!
What lungs to lift above the roar!
What captain on his quarter-deck

To mock the sea and scorn the shore!
I like that scar across his breast,
I like his ardent, lover's zest!"

III

The huge sea-beast uprose, uprose,
As if to surely topple down;
He reached his black and bearded nose
Above his harem, gray, black, brown,
Sleek, shining, wet or steaming dry,
And mouthed and mouthed against the sky.

IV

What eloquence, what hot love pain!
What land but this, what love but his?
What isle of bliss but this and this—
To roar and love and roar again?
What land, what love but this his own,
Loud thundered from his slippery throne;
Loud thundered in his Sappho's ear,
As if she could not, would not hear.

V

At last her heart was moved and she
Raised two bright eyes to his black beard,
Then sudden turned, as if she feared,
And threw her headlong in the sea,
Another Sappho, all for love.
While Phaon towered still above—
An instant only; yet once more
That upheaved head, that great bull neck,

That sea-born, bossed, bull-throated roar—
A poise, a plunge, a flash, a fleck,
And far down, caverned in the deep,
Where sea-green curtains swing and sweep
And varicolored carpets creep,
Soft emerald or amethyst,
Two lion lovers kept sweet tryst.

VI

She looked, looked long, then smiled, then sighed,
A proud, pure soul unsatisfied,
Then sat dense grasses suddenly
And thrust a foot above the sea.
She threw her backward, arms wide out,
And up the poppy-spangled steep
O'er grass-set cushions sown in gold,
As she would sleep yet would not sleep.
She reached her wide hands fast about
And grasses, gold and manifold,
Of lowly blossoms, pink and blue,
She gathered in and laughing threw,
With bare-armed, heedless, happy grace—
Threw fragrant handfuls in his face.
And then as if to sleep she lay,
A babe nursed at the breast of May—
Lay back with wide eyes to the skies
And clouds of wondrous butterflies;
Such Mariposa blooms in air!
Such bloomy, golden, poppy hair!
And which were hers or poppy's gold
Without close care none could have told;
And which were butterflies or bloom,

To guess there was not guessing room,
The while, in quest of sweets or rest,
They fanned her face, they kissed her breast.

VII

That face like to a lilt of song—
A face of sea-shell tint, with tide
Of springtime flowing fast and strong
And fearless in its maiden pride—
Such rich rose ambushed in such hair
Of heedless, wind-kissed, poppy gold,
Blown here, blown there, blown anywhere,
Soft-lifting, falling fold on fold,
As made gold poppies where she lay
Turn envious, turn green as May!
What wise face yet what wilful face,
A face that would not be denied
No more than gipsy winds that race
The sea bank in their saucy pride;
A form that knew yet only knew
The natural, the human, true.

VIII

Those two round mounds of Nineveh,
What treasures of the past they knew!
But these two round mounds here to-day
Hold treasures richer far than they,
And prophecies more truly true.
Old Nineveh's twin mounds are dust;
They only know the ghostly past;
But these two new mounds hold in trust
The awful future, hold the vast

Unbounded empire, land or sea,
Henceforth, for all eternity.
Let pass dead pasts; far wiser turn
And delve the future; love and learn.

IX

It seems she dreamed. She slept, we know,
A happy, quiet little space,
Then thrust a round limb far below
And half-way turned aside her face,
And then she threw her arms wide out
In sleep, and so reached blind about,
As if for something she might find
From fortune-telling, gipsy wind.

X

The soft, warm winds from far away
Were weary, and they crept so near
They lay against her willing ear
As if they had so much to say.
And she, she seemed so glad to hear
The while she loving, sleeping lay
And dreamed of love nor dreamed of doubt,
But laughing thrust her form far out
And down the fragrant poppy steep
In playful, restless, happy sleep.
She sighed, she heaved her hilly breast,
As one who would but could not rest.

XI

How natural, how free, how fair,
The while the happy winds on wing,
As larger butterflies, laid bare
A rippled, braided rim of white
And outstretched ankles exquisite.
What arms to hold a babe at breast—
Such breast as prudist never guessed!
What shapely limbs, what everything
That makes great woman great and good—
That makes for proud, pure motherhood!

XII

Such thews as mount the steeps of morn,
Such limbs as love, not lust shall share,
Such legs as God has shaped to bear
The weight of ages, worlds unborn;
Such limbs as Lesbian shrines revealed
When comely, longing mothers kneeled;
Such thews as Phidias loved to hew,
Such limbs as Leighton loved to draw
When painting tall, Greek girls at play;
Such legs as blind old Homer saw,
As Marlowe knew but yesterday,
When Helen climbed in dreams for him
Her cloud-topped towers of Ilium.

CANTO III

I

White sea-gulls glistened in the sun—
Ten thousand if a single one—
And every sea-dove knew his mate.
Far, far at sea, the Farallones
Sent up a million plaintive moans
From sea-beasts moaning love, or hate.
The sun sank weary, flushed and worn,
The warm sea-winds sank tattered, torn,
The sun and sea lay welded, wed;
The day lay crouched upon the deep
Half closed, as eyes half closed in sleep,
Half closed, as some good book half read.

II

The sea was as an opal sea
Inlaid with scintillating light,
Yet close about and left and right
The sea lay banked and bossed in night,
As black as ever night may be.

III

The sundown sea all sudden then
Lay argent, pallid, white as death.
As when some great thing dies; as when
A god gasps in one final breath
And heaves full length his somber bed.
The sundown sea now shone, mobile,
Translucent, flaming, molten steel,

Red, green, then tenfold more than red,
And then of every hue, a hint
Of doubloons spilling from the mint,
Alternate, changing, manifold,
Yet melting, minting all to gold.

IV

Far mountain peaks flashed flecks of gold
And dashed with dappled flecks the skies.
"Behold," said he, "the fleecy fold
Now slowly, surely, homeward hies.
Such cobalt blue, such sheep of gold,
Such gold as hath not place or name
In elsewhere land, because no seer
Hath seen or dauntless prophet told
Where stood the loom in primal peace
That wove the fair, first golden fleece.
Behold, what gold-flecked flocks of Light!
Ten million moving sheep of gold,
Wee lambs of gold that nudge their dams,
Great hornèd, wrinkled, heady rams!

V

"Slow-shepherded, the golden sheep,
With bent horns lowered to the deep,
Come home; the hollows of the sea
Receive and house them lovingly.
The little lambs of Light come home
And house them in the argent foam,
The while He counts them every one,
And shuts the Gate, for day is done.

VI

"Aye, day is done, the dying sun
Sinks wounded unto death to-night;
A great, hurt swan, he sinks to rest,
His wings all crimson, blood his breast!
What wide, low wings, reached left and right,
He sings, and night and swan are one—
One huge black swan of Helicon.

VII

"What crimson breast, what crimson wings
The while he dies, and dying sings!
Yet safe is housed the happy fold,
The golden sheep, the fleece of gold
That lured the dauntless Argonaut—
The fleece that daring Jason sought."

VIII

She waking sighed, soft murmuring,
As waters from some wood-walled spring:
"Oh happy, huge, horn-headed rams,
To guide and lead the golden fleece,
To ward the fold of fat increase
Fast mated to your golden dams!
What bridal gold, what golden bride,
What golden twin lambs, side by side!
Oh happy, happy nudging lambs,
Thrice happy, happy golden dams!"

IX

His face was still against the west;
For still a flush of gold was there
That would not or that could not rest,
But seemed some night bird of the air.
At last, with half-averted head
And dreamfully, as dreaming, said:
"What banker gathers yonder gold
That sinks, sea-washed, beyond the deeps?
Lie there no sands to house and hold
This sunset gold in countless heaps?
There sure must be some far, fierce land,
Some Guinea shore, some fire-fed strand,
Some glowing, palm-set, pathless spot
Where all this sunset gold is stored,
As misers gather hoard on hoard.
There sure must be, beyond this sea,
Some Argo's gold, some argosy,
Some golden fleece, long since forgot,
To wait the coming Argonaut."

X

She sprang up sudden, savagely,
And flushed, and paled, looked far away,
Grinding gold poppies with her heel.
She could not say, she could but feel.
She nothing said, because that they
Who really feel can rarely say.
And then she looked up, forth and far,
And pointed to the pale North Star,
The while her color went and came
From pink to white, from frost to flame.

XI

For this, the one forbidden theme,
The one hard, dread, unquiet dream
That he should go, lead forth and far
Below the triple Arctic star,
As he had planned; and now to speak,
To hint—she heard with pallid cheek.
Hard had she tried, had fain forgot
How strong, strange men were trending far
Against this cold, elusive star,
And he their Jason—Argonaut!

CANTO IV

I

How passing fair, how wondrous fair
This daughter of the yellow sun!
Her sunlit length and strength of hair
Seemed sun and gold inwound in one.
How strangely silent, unaware,
Unconscious quite of strength or grace
Or peril of her beauteous face,
She stood, the first-born of a race,
A proud, new race, scarce yet begun.
How tall she stood, free debonair—
How stately and how supple, tall,
The time she loosened and let fall
Her tossed and mighty Titian hair!

II

So beautiful she was, as one
From out some priceless picture-book!
You could but love, you had no choice
But love and turn again to look.
How young she was and yet how old!—
Red orange ripened in the sun
Where never hand had reached as yet.
The calm strength of her lifted face,
The low notes of her tuneful voice,
Were mint-marks of that wondrous race
But scarcely born nor known as yet
Beyond yon yellow hills that fret
Warm sea-winds with their waving pine.
A princess of that royal line
Of kings who came and silent passed,
Yet, passing, set bold, royal hand
And mighty mint-marks on the land,
And set it there to last and last,
As if in bronzen copper cast.

III

He, too, was born of men who wooed
The savage walks of solitude,
And hewed close, clean to nature's laws—
Of men who knew not tears or fears,
Of men full-sexed, yet men who knew
Not sex till perfect manhood was.
When men had thews of antique men,
And one stood with the strength of ten;
When men gat men who dared to do;

Gat men of heart who dwelt apart,
As Adam dwelt, when giants grew
And men as gods drew ample breath—
As Adams with their thousand years,
Ere drunkenness of sex had done
The silly world to willing death.

IV

What royal parentage, what true
Nobility, those men who knew
The light, who chased the yellow sun
From sea to sea triumphantly,
And westward fought and westward won,
As never daring man had done.

V

They housed with God upon the height;
Companioned with the peak, the pine;
They led the red-lit firing line.
Walled 'round by room and room and room,
They read God's open book at night,
And drank His star-distilled perfume;
By day they dared the trackless west
And chased the battling sun to rest.

VI

Such sad, mad marches to the sea,
Such silent sacrifice, such trust!
Such months of marching, misery,

Such mountains heaped with heroes' dust!
Yet what stout thews the fearless few
Who won the sea at last, who knew
The cleansing fire and laid hold
To hammer out their house of gold!

VII

Their cities zone their sea of seas,
Their white tents top the mountain's crest.
The coward? He trenched not with these,
The weakling? He was laid to rest.
Each man stood forth a man, such men
As God wrought not since time began,
Each man a hero, lion each.
Behold what length of limb, what length
Of life, of love, what daring reach
To deep-hived honeycomb! What strength!
How clean his hands, how stout his heart
To dare, to do, camp, court or mart.
He stands so tall, so clean, he hears
The morning music of the spheres.

VIII

He loved her, feared her, far apart,
He kept his ways and dreamed his dreams;
He sang strange songs, he tuned his heart
To music of the pines that preach
Such sermons on such holy themes
As only he who climbs can reach.

IX

He would not selfish pluck one rose
To wear upon his breast a day
And let its perfume pass away
With any wind that comes or goes.
Why, he might walk God's garden through
Nor touch one bud nor fright one bird.
The music of the spheres he heard,
The harmony he breathed, he knew.
He never marred God's harmony
With one harsh thought. The favored few
Who cared to live above the sod
And lift glad faces up to God
He knew loved all as well as he,
Had equal right to rose or tree.

X

And he must spare all to the day
Their willing feet should pass the way
God in His garden walked at eve.
And as for weaklings who by turn
Would jest or jeer, he could but grieve,
And pity all and silent say:
"Let us lead forth, make fair the way;
By time and stress they, too, will learn
Which way to live, to love, to turn."

XI

The long, lean Polar bear uprose,
Outreached a paw, a bare, black nose,

As if to still hold hard control,
By glacier steep or ice-packed main,
His mighty battlemented snows.
He bared his yellow teeth in vain;
Then backed against his bleak North Pole
He sulked and shook his icy chain.
And he who dared not pluck a rose,
As if in chorus with his pine,
Must up and lead the battle line
Beyond the awesome Arctic chine.

XII

No airy sighs, no tales to tell;
He knew God is, that all is well,
That death is but a name, a date,
A milestone by the stormy road,
Where you may lay aside your load
And bow your face and rest and wait,
Defying fear, defying fate.

XIII

How fair is San Francisco Bay
When golden stars consort and when
The moon pours silver paths for men,
And care walks by the other way!
Huge ships, black-bellied, lay below
Broad, yellow flags from silken Chind,
Round, blood-red banners from Nippon,
Like to her sun at sudden dawn—
Brave battle-ships as white as snow,
With bannered stars tossed to the wind,
Warm as a kiss when love is kind.

XIV

'Twas twilight, such soft, twilight night
As only Californians know,
When faithful love is forth, and when
The Bay lies bathed in mellow light;
And perfumed breath and softened breeze
Blows far from Honolulu's seas—
From sundown seas in afterglow—
When Song sits at the feet of men
And pipes, low-voiced as mated dove,
For love to measure step with love.

XV

And yet, for all the perfumed seas,
The peace, the silent harmonies,
The two stood mute, estranged before
Her high-built, stately, opened door
High up the terraced, plunging hill
As hushed as death, as white and still.

XVI

The moon, amid her yellow fleet,
With full, white sail, moved on and on,
And drew, as loving hearts are drawn,
All seas of earth fast following,
As slow she sailed her sapphire seas.
Then, as if pausing, pitying,
She poured down at their very feet
Broad silver ways to walk upon
Which way they would, or east or west,
Which way they would, or worst or best.

XVII

Her voice was low, low leaned her head,
Her two white hands all helpless prest
As if to hush her aching breast,
As if to bid her aching heart
To silent bear its bitter part,
The while she choking, sobbing, said:
"Then here, for all our poppy days,
Here, here, the parting of the ways?"

XVIII

"Aye, so you will it. Here divide
The ways, forever and a day.
You, you—you women lead the way—
You lead where love hangs crucified,
Where love is laid prone in the dust—
Where cunning, cold men mouth sweet lies
And make pure love their merchandise.
You heedless lead to hollow lands
Of bloodless hearts and nerveless hands;
I will not rival such, nay, nay
Not look on such, save with disgust."

XIX

Her head sank lower still: her hair,
Her heavy hair, great skeins of gold,
Hung loosened, heedless, fold on fold,
As if she cared not, could not care;
She tried to speak but nothing said;

She could but press her aching heart,
Step back a pace and shudder, start,
The while she slowly moved her head,
As if to say; but nothing said.

XX

Her silence lit his soul with rage,
He strode before her, forth and back,
A lion strident in his cage,
Hard bound within his iron track.
And then he paused, shook back his head,
And fronting her half savage said:
"My father, yours, each Argonaut
An Alexander, to this sea
Came forth and conquered mightily.

XXI

"God, what great loves, what lovers when
These westmost states were born of men,
When giants gripped their hands and came
With nerves of steel and souls of flame—
Could you not wait within yon Gate,
As their loves dared to wait and wait?
An hundred thousand Didos sat
Atlantic's sea-bank nor forgot,
The while their lovers westmost fought,
But patient sat as Dido, when
She waved Æneas back again
And bravely dared to smile thereat.

XXII

"Hear me! All Europe, rind to core,
Is rotting, tumbling, base to top.
Withhold the gold and silver prop
Our dauntless fathers hewed of yore
From yonder seamed Sierras' core,
And such a toppling you may hear
As never fell on mortal ear.

XXIII

"What's London town but sorrow's town
And sins, such as I dare not name?
Such thousands creeping up and down
Its dreary streets in draggled shame!
What's London but a market pen—
Its hundred thousand lewd, rude men?
What's London but a town of stone,
Its thousand thousand women prone?

XXIV

"What's Paris but a painted screen,
A gaudy gauze that scant conceals
The sensuous nakedness between
The folds it but the more reveals?
What's Paris but a circus, fair,
To tempt this west world's open purse
With tawdry trinkets, toys bizarre?
Ah, would that she were nothing worse!
What's Paris but a piteous mart
For west-world mothers crazed to trade
Some silly, simpering, weak maid
For thread-bare, out-at-elbows rank—

To outworn, weak degenerate
Whose bank is but the faro bank,
Whose grave bounds all his real estate;
Whose boast, whose only stock in trade,
A duel and a ruined maid!

XXV

"What's Berlin, Dresden, sorry Rome,
But traps that take you unaware?
Behold yon paintings, right at home,
Where nature paints with patient care
Such splendid pictures, sea and shore,
As all the world should bow before;
Such pictures hanging to the skies
Against the walls of Paradise,
From base to bastion, as should wake
Piave's painter from the dust;
Such walls of color crowned in snow,
Such steeps, such deeps, profoundly vast,
As old-time Art had died to know,
And knowing, died content, as he
Who looked from Nimo's steep to see,
Just once, the Promised Land, and passed!
And yet, for all yon scene, this sea,
You will not bide, Penelope?"

XXVI

"Then go, since you so will it, go!
My way lies yonder, forth and far
Beneath yon gleaming northmost star
O'er silent lands of trackless snow.
Lo, there leads duty, hope, as when
This westmost world demanded men:

Such men as led the firing line
When blood ran free as festal wine;
Such men as when, fast side by side,
Our fathers fought and fighting died."

XXVII

"But go—good by! Go see again
The noisy circus, since you must;
Its painted women that disgust,
Its nauseating monkey men;
But mark you, Beautiful, the moth
That loves that luring, sensuous light—
Nay, hear! I am not wilful, wroth;
I love with such exceeding might,
My beautiful, my all, my life,
I would not, could not take to wife
My lily tainted by the touch
The breath, the very sight of such.

XXVIII

"Shall I see leprous apes lean o'er
My rose, breathe, touch it if they may,
With breath that is a very stench,
The while they bow and bend before,
Familiar, as with some weak wench,
And smirk in double-meaning French?

XXIX

"You shrink back angered? Well, adieu;
What, not a hand? What, not a touch? . . .
My crime is that I love too much,
My crime is that I love too true,

Love you, love you, not part of you—
Yea, how much less the rose that droops
In fevered halls where folly stoops!

XXX

"Yon splendid, triple, midnight star
Is mine; I follow fast and sure,
Because it guides so far, so far
From fevered follies that allure
Your soul, your splendid, spotless soul
To wreck where siren billows roll—
Good night! What, turn aside your face
That I might never see again
Its lifted glory and proud grace,
As some brave beacon light! Well, then, . . .
Ha, ha! Let's laugh lest one may weep—
How steep your hill seems, steeps how steep!
How deep down seems the misty town,
How lone, how dark, how distant down!
The moon, too, turns her face, her light,
As you have turned your face tonight,
As you have turned your face from me,
My heartless, lost Penelope."

XXXI

Then sudden up she tossed her head,
And, face to his face, proudly said:
"Penelope! To wait and weave!
Penelope! To wait and wait,
As waits a dog within his gate;
To weave and unweave, grieve and grieve,
As some weak harem favorite
Tight fenced from action, life, and light!

XXXII

"Why, I should not have sat one day
To that dull-threaded, thudding loom,
With cowards crowding fast for room
To say what brave men dare not say!
Why, I had snatched down from the wall
His second sword that sad, first day
And set its edge to end it all!—
Had hewn that loom to splinters, yea,
Had slashed the warp, enmeshed the woof
And called that dog and put to proof
Each silly suitor hounding me,
Then hoisted sail and bent to sea!

XXXIII

"Penelope! Penelope!
Of all fool tales in history
I think this tale the foolishest!
Why I, the favored of that land,
Had such fools come to seek my hand,
Had ranged in line the sexless list
And frankly answered with my fist!"

XXXIV

He passed. She paused. Each helpless hand
Fell down, fell heavy down as lead;
She tried but could not understand.
At last she raised once more her head,
Set firm her lips, stepped back a pace,
Looked long his far star in the face,
Stood stately, still, as fixed as fate,

Till all the east flushed sudden red;
Then as she turned within she said:
"I cannot, will not, will not wait."
* * * * * * *

He passed, with set lips, lifted hand,
He passed the northmost golden zone
Of dreamful, yellow poppy land,
And silent passed, and so alone!

Beyond the utmost Oregon,
Far, far beyond and still beyond,
Where the crisp, clean waters rattle
O'er the sparkling, shining shale,
Where the dusky king, Seattle,
Lorded mountain, wold and vale,
When he drave his galleon
Where scarce a battle-ship would dare,
Far out, far out, or dusk or dawn,
An hundred leagues of sea to fare
All up or down or anywhere—
Whose dusky, tall, breeched oarsmen ate
Red salmon of an hundred weight.

His huge white cedar ships were wrought
By flint and flame and ballasted
With slabs of virgin copper brought
From hidden mountain mines and red
With dash and dot of native gold—
Their coin, their currency of old.
Here white Tacoma smiles upon
Wild, wood-born blackness everywhere!
Here hairy monsters prowl and howl
Their whole night long and nothing care,
White-fanged or mated cheek by jowl.

Here nature is, here man may trace
First footprints of his brutal race.

On, on, what wood-hung waters these;
What baby cities crowd the seas!
What British ships incessantly
Cross swords with stately shadow trees!
What white-maned stallions plunge and play
And charge and challenge day by day
These baby cities of the wold
That sit their shifting sands of gold!
What black firs climb the cloud-capped steep
And bid the bold invaders halt!
What robust Britons mount and keep
Their topless walls of Esquimalt!

On, on, what inland seas of wonder,
So icy cold, so spicy keen,
So deep as fate, so clear, so clean!
You taste a tingling, spicy breath
What time the avalanche's thunder
Grinds balm and balsam woods to death
And in these wood-walled seas of wonder
Swift drowns his dread, earth-shaking thunder;
While here and there, beneath the trees
White ice tents dash and dot the seas.

BOOK SECOND

CANTO I

I

His triple star led on and on,
Led up blue, bastioned Chilkoot Pass
To clouds, through clouds, above white clouds
That droop with snows like beaded strouds—
Above a world of gleaming glass,
Where loomed such cities of the skies
As only prophets look upon,
As only loving poets see,
With prophet ken of mystery.

II

What lone, white silence, left or right,
What whiteness, something more than white!
Such steel blue whiteness, van or rear—
Such silence as you could but hear
Above the sparkled, frosted rime,
As if the steely stars kept time
And sang their mystic, mighty rune—
. . . And oh, the icy, eerie moon!

III

What temples, towers, tombs of white,
White tombs, white tombstones, left and right,
That pushed the passing night aside
To ward where fallen stars had died—
To ward white tombs where dead stars lay—

White tombs more white, more bright than
they;
White tombs high heaped white tombs upon—
White Ossa piled on Pelion!

IV

Pale, steel stars flashed, rose, fell again,
Then paused, leaned low, as pitying,
And leaning so they ceased to sing,
The while the moon, with mother care,
Slow rocked her silver rocking-chair.

V

Night here, mid-year, is as a span;
Thor comes, a gold-clad king of war,
Comes only as the great Thor can.
Thor storms the battlements and Thor,
Far leaping, clinging crowned upon,
Throws battle hammer forth and back
Until the walls blaze in his track
With sparks and it is sudden dawn—
Dawn, sudden, sparkling, as a gem—
A jeweled, frost-set diadem
Of diamond, ruby, radium.

VI

Two tallest, ice-tipt peaks take flame,
Take yellow flame, take crimson, pink,
Then, ere you yet have time to think,
Take hues that never yet had name.
Then turret, minaret, and tower,

As if to mark some mystic hour,
Or ancient, lost Masonic sign,
Take on a darkness like to night,
Deep night below the yellow light
That erstwhile seemed some snow-white tomb.
Then all is set in ghostly gloom,
As some dim-lighted, storied shrine—
As if the stars forget to stay
At court when comes the kingly day.

VII

And now the high-built shafts of brass,
Gate posts that guard the tomb-set pass,
Put off their crowns, rich robes, and all
Their sudden, splendid light let fall;
And tomb and minaret and tower
Again gleam as that midnight hour.
While day, as scorning still to wait,
Drives fiercely through the ice-built gate
That guards the Arctic's outer hem
Of white, high-built Jerusalem.

VIII

To see, to guess the great white throne,
Behold Alaska's ice-built steeps
Where everlasting silence keeps
And white death lives and lords alone:
Go see God's river born full grown—
The gold of this stream it is good:
Here grows the Ark's white gopher wood—
A wide, white land, unnamed, unknown,
A land of mystery and moan.

IX

Tall, trim, slim gopher trees incline,
A leaning, laden, helpless copse,
And moan and creak and intertwine
Their laden, twisted, tossing tops,
And moan all night and moan all day
With winds that walk these steeps alway.

X

The melancholy moose looks down,
A tattered Capuchin in brown,
A gaunt, ungainly, mateless monk,
An elephant without his trunk,
While far, against the gleaming blue,
High up a rock-topt ridge of snow,
Where scarce a dream would care to go,
Climb countless blue-clad caribou,
In endless line till lost to view.

XI

The rent ice surges, grinds and groans,
Then gorges, backs, and climbs the shore,
Then breaks with sudden rage and roar
And plunging, leaping, foams and moans
Swift down the surging, seething stream—
Mad hurdles of some monstrous dream.

XII

To see God's river born full grown,
To see him burst the womb of earth
And leap, a giant at his birth,

Through shoreless whiteness, with wild shout—
A shout so sharp, so cold, so dread
You see, feel, hear, his sheeted dead—
'Tis as to know, no longer doubt,
'Tis as to know the eld Unknown,
Aye, bow before the great white throne.

XIII

White-hooded nuns, steeps gleaming white,
Lean o'er his cradle, left and right,
And weep the while he moans and cries
And rends the earth with agonies;
High ice-heaved summits where no thing
Has yet set foot or flashed a wing—
Bare ice-built summits where the white
Wide world is but a sea of white—
White kneeling nuns that kneel and feed
The groaning ice god in his greed,
And feed, forever feed, man's soul.
The full-grown river bounds right on
From out his birthplace tow'rd the Pole;
He knows no limit, no control:
He scarce is here till he is gone—
This sudden, mad, ice-born Yukon.

XIV

Beyond white plunging Chilkoot Pass,
That trackless Pass of stately tombs,
Of midday glories, midnight glooms,
Of morn's great gate posts, girt in brass—
This courtier, born to nature's court,
This comrade, peer of peaks, still kept
Companion with the stars and leapt

And laughed, the gliding sea of glass
Beneath his feet in merry sport.

XV

Then mute red men, the quick canoe,
Then o'er the ice-born surge and on,
Till gleaming snows and steeps were gone,
Till wide, deep waters, swirling, blue,
Received the sudden, swift canoe,
That leapt and laughed and laughing flew.

XVI

Then tall, lean trees, girth scarce a span,
With moss-set, moss-hung banks of gold
Most rich in hue, more gorgeous than
Silk carpetings of Turkestan:
Deep yellow mosses, rich as gold,
More gorgeous than the eye of man
Hath seen save in this wonderland—
Then flashing, tumbling, headlong waves
Below white, ice-bound, ice-built shores—
The river swept a stream of white
Where basalt bluffs made day like night.
And then they heard no sound, the oars
Were idle, still as grassy graves.

XVII

And then the mad, tumultuous moon
Spilt silver seas to plunge upon,
Possessed the land, a sea of white.
That white moon rivaled the red dawn
And slew the very name of night,

And walked the grave of afternoon—
That vast, vehement, stark mad moon!

XVIII

The wide, still waters, sedgy shore,
A lank, brown wolf, a hungry howl,
A lean and hungry midday moon;
And then again the red man's oar—
A wide-winged, mute, white Arctic owl,
A black, red-crested, screeching loon
That knew not night from middle noon,
Nor gold-robed sun from lean, lank moon—
That crazy, black, red-crested loon.

XIX

Swift narrows now, and now and then
A broken boat with drowning men;
The wide, still marshes, dank as death,
Where honked the wild goose long and loud
With unabated, angry breath.
Black swallows twittered in a cloud
Above the broad mosquito marsh,
The wild goose honked, forlorn and harsh;
Honked, fluttered, flew in warlike mood
Above her startled, myriad brood,
The while the melancholy moose,
As if to mock the honking goose,
Forsook his wall, plunged in the wave
And sank, as sinking in a grave,
Sank to his eyes, his great, sad eyes,
And watched, in wonder, mute surprise,
Watched broken barge and drowning men
Drift, swirl, then plunge the gorge again.

XX

Again that great white Arctic owl,
As pitying, it perched the bank
Where swirled a barge and swirling sank—
A drowned man swirling with white face
Low lifting from the swift whirlpool.
That distant, doleful, hilltop howl—
That screaming, crimson-crested fool!
And oh, that eerie, ice-made moon
That hung the cobalt tent of blue
And looked straight down, to look you through,
That dead man swirling in his place,
That honking, honking, huge gray goose,
That solitary, sad-eyed moose,
That owl, that wolf, that human loon,
And oh, that death's head, hideous moon!

XXI

And this the Yukon, night by night,
The yellow Yukon, day by day;
A land of death, vast, voiceless, white,
A graveyard locked in ice-set clay,
A graveyard to the Judgment Day.

XXII

On, on, the swirling pool was gone,
On, on, the boat swept on, swept on,
That moon was as a thousand moons!
Two dead men swirled, one swept, one sank—
Two wolves, two owls, two yelling loons!

And now three loons! How many moons?
How many white owls perch the shore?
Three lank, black wolves along the bank
That watch the drowned men swirl or sink!
Three screeching loons along the brink—
That moon disputing with the dawn
That dared the yellow, dread Yukon!

XXIII

And why so like some lorn graveyard
Where only owls and loons may say
And life goes by the other way?
Aye, why so hideous and so hard,
So deathly hard to look upon?
Because this cold, wild, dread Yukon,
Of gold-sown banks, of sea white waves,
Is but one land, one sea of graves.

XXIV

Behold where bones hang either bank!
Great tusks of beasts before the flood
That floated here and floating sank—
'Mid ice-locked walls and ice-hung steep,
With muck and stone and moss and mud,
Where only death and darkness keep!
Lo, this is death-land! Heap on heap,
By ice-strown strand or rock-built steep,
By moss-brown walls, gray, green or blue,
The Yukon cleaves a graveyard through!
Three thousand miles of tusk anad bone,
Strown here, strown there, all heedless strown,
All strown and sown just as they lay

That time the fearful deluge passed,
Safe locked in ices to the last,
Safe locked, as records laid away,
To wait, to wait, the Judgment Day.

XXV

He landed, pierced the ice-locked earth,
He burned it to the very bone—
Burned and laid bare the deep bedstone
Placed at the building, at the birth
Of morn, and here, there, everywhere,
Such bones of bison, mastodon!
Such tusky monsters without name!
Great ice-bound bones with flesh scarce gone,
So fresh the wild dogs nightly came
To fight about and feast upon.
And gold along the bedrock lay
So bounteous below the bones
Men barely need to turn the stones
To fill their skins, within the day,
With rich, red gold and go their way.

XXVI

"The gold of that place it is good."
Lo, here God laid the Paradise!
Lo, here each witness of the flood,
Tight jailed in ice eternal, lies
To wait the bailiff's chorus call:
"Come into court, come one, come all!"
But why so cold, so deathly cold
The battered beasts, the scattered gold,
The pleasant trees of Paradise,
Deep locked in everlasting ice?

XXVII

Oyez! the red man's simple tale;
He says that once, o'er hill and vale,
Ripe fruits hung ready all the year;
That man knew neither frost nor fear,
That bison wallowed to the eyes
In grass, that palm trees brushed the skies
Where birds made music all day long.
That then a great chief shaped a spear
Bone-tipt and sharp and long and strong,
And made a deadly moon-shaped bow,
And then a flint-tipt arrow wrought.
Then cunning, snake-like, creeping low,
As creeps a cruel cat, he sought
And in sheer wantonness he shot
A large-eyed, trusting, silly roe.
And then, exultant, crazed, he slew
Ten bison, ten tame bear and, too,
A harmless, long-limbed, shambling moose;
That then the smell of blood let loose
The passions of all men and all
Uprose and slew, or great or small—
Uprose and slew till hot midday
All four-foot creatures in their way;
Then proud, defiant, every one,
Shook his red spear-point at the sun.

XXVIII

Then God said, through a mist of tears,
"What would ye, braves made mad with blood?"

And then they shook their bone-tipt spears
And cried, "The sun it is not good!
Too hot the sun, too long the day;
Break off and throw the end away!"

XXIX

Then God, most angered instantly,
Drew down the day from out the sky
And brake the day across his knee
And hurled the fragments hot and high
And far down till they fell upon
The bronzing waves of dread Yukon,
Nor spared the red men one dim ray
Of light to lead them on their way.

XXX

And then the red men filled the lands
With wailing for just one faint ray
Of light to guide them home that they
Might wash and cleanse their blood-red hands.

XXXI

But God said, "Yonder, far away
Down yon Yukon, your broken day!
Go gather it from out the night!
That fitful, fearful Northern Light,
Is all that ye shall ever know
To guide henceforth the way you go.

XXXII

"You shall not see my face again,
But you shall see cold death instead.
This land hath sinned, this land is dead;
You drenched your beauteous land in blood,
And now behold the wild, white rain
Shall fall until a drowning flood
Shall fill all things above, below,
To wash away the smell of blood,
And birds shall die and beasts be dumb,
When cold, the cold of death shall come
And weave a piteous shroud of snow,
In graveyard silence, ever so."

XXXIII

The red men say that then the rain
Drowned all the fires of the world,
Then drowned the fires of the moon;
That then the sun came not again,
Save in the middle summer noon,
When hot, red lances they had hurled
Are hurled at them like fiery rain,
Till Yukon rages like a main.

XXXIV

With bated breath these skin-clad men
Tell why the big-nosed moose foreknew
The flood; how, bandy-legged, he flew
Far up high Saint Elias: how
Down in the slope of his left horn,
The raven rested, night and morn;

How, in the hollow of his right,
The dove-hued moose-bird nestled low
Until they touched the utmost height;
How dove and raven soon took flight
And winged them forth and far away;
But how the moose did stay and stay,
His great sad eyes all wet with tears,
And keep his steeps two thousand years.

XXXV

He heard the half nude red men say,
Close huddled to the flame at night,
How in the hollow of a palm
A woman and a water rat,
That dreadful, darkened, drowning day,
Crept close and nestled in their fright;
And how a bear, tame as a lamb,
Came to them in the tree and sat
The long, long drift-time to the sea,
The while the wooing water rat
Made love to her incessantly;
How then the bear became a priest
And married them at last; how then
To them was born the shortest, least
Of all the children of all men,
And yet most cunning and most brave
Of all who dare the bleak north wave.

XXXVI

What tales of tropic fruit! No tale
But of some soft, sweet, sensuous clime,
Of love and lovely maiden's trust—

Some peopled, pleasant, palm-hung vale
Of everlasting summer time—
And, then the deadly sin of lust;
Forbidden fruit, shame and disgust!

XXXVII

And whence the story of it all,
The palm land, love land and the fall?
Was't born of ages of desire
From such sad children of the snows
For something fairer, better, higher?
God knows, God knows, God only knows.
But I should say, hand laid to heart
And head made bare, as I would swear,
These piteous, sad-faced children there
Knew Eden, the expulsion, knew
The deluge, knew the deluge true!

XXXVIII

And what though this be surely so?
Just this: I know, as all men know,
As few before this surely knew—
Just this, and count it great or small,
The best of you or worst of you,
The Bible, lid to lid, is true!

CANTO II

I

The year waxed weary, gouty, old;
The crisp days dwindled to a span,
The dying year it fell as cold
As dead feet of a dying man.
The hard, long, weary work was done,
The dark, deep pits probed to the bone,
And each had just one tale to tell.
Ten thousand argonauts as one,
Agnostic, Christian, infidel,
All said, despite of creed or class,
All said as one, "As surely as
The Bible is, the deluge was,
Whate'er the curse, whate'er the cause!"

II

What merry men these miners were,
And mighty in their pent-up force!
They wrought for her, they fought for her,
For her alone, or night or day,
In tent or camp, their one discourse
The Love three thousand miles away,
The Love who waked to watch and pray.

III

Yet rude were they and brutal they,
Their love a blended love and lust,
Born of this later, loveless day;

You could but love them for their truth,
Their frankness and their fiery youth,
And yet turn from them in disgust,
To loathe, to pity, and mistrust.

IV

The Siege of Troy knew scarce such men,
Such hardy, daring men as they,
The coward had not voyaged then,
The weak had died upon the way.

V

They sang, they sang some like to this,
"I say risk all for one warm kiss;
I say 'twere better risk the fall,
Like Romeo, to venture all
And boldly climb to deadly bliss."

VI

I like that savage, Sabine way;
What mighty minstrels came of it!
Their songs are ringing to this day,
The bravest ever sung or writ;
Their loves the love of Juliet,
Of Portia, Desdemona, yea,
The old true loves are living yet;
And we, we love, we weep, we sigh,
In love with loves that will not die.

VII

Then take her, lover, sword in hand,
Hot-blooded and red-handed, clasp
Her sudden, stormy, tall and grand,
And lift her in your iron grasp
And kiss her, kiss her till she cries
From keen, sweet, happy, killing pain.
Aye, kiss her till she seeming dies;
Aye, kiss her till she dies, and then,
Why kiss her back to life again!

VIII

I love all things that truly love,
I love the low-voiced cooing dove
In wooing time, he woos so true,
His soft notes fall so overfull
Of love they thrill me through and through.
But when the thunder-throated bull
Upheaves his head and shakes the air
With eloquence and battle's blare,
And roars and tears the earth to woo,
I like his warlike wooing too.

IX

Yet best to love that lover is
Who loves all things beneath the sun,
Then finds all fair things in just one,
And finds all fortune in one kiss.

X

How wisely born, how more than wise,
How wisely learned must be that soul
Who loves all earth, all Paradise,
All people, places, pole to pole,
Yet in one kiss includes the whole!

XI

Give me a lover ever bold,
A lover clean, keen, sword in hand,
Like to those white-plumed knights of old
Whose loves held honor in the land;
Those men with hot blood in their veins
And hot, swift, iron hand to kill—
Those women loving well the chains
That bound them fast against their will;
Yet loved and lived—are living still.

XII

Enough: the bronzed man launched his boat,
A faithful dwarf clutched at the oar,
And Boreas began to roar
As if to break his burly throat.

XIII

Down, down by basalt palisade,
Down, down by bleakest ice-piled isle!
The mute, dwarf water rat afraid?
The water rat it could but smile
To hear the cold, wild waters roar
Against his savage Arctic shore.

XIV

But now he listened, gave a shout,
A startled cry, akin to fear.
The hand of God had reached swift out
And locked, as in an iron vise,
The whole white world in blue-black ice,
And daylight scarce seemed living more.
The day, the year, the world, lay dead.
With star-tipt candles foot and head;
Great stars, that burn a whole half year,
Stood forth, five-horned, and near, so near!

XV

The ghost-white day scarce drew a breath,
The dying day shrank to a span;
There was no life save that of man
And woolly dogs—man, dogs, and death!
The sun, a mass of molten gold,
Surged feebly up, then sudden rolled
Right back as in a beaten track
And left the white world to the moon
And five-horned stars of gleaming gold;
Such stars as sang in silent rune—
And oh, the cold, such killing cold
As few have felt and none have told!

XVI

And now he knew the last dim light
Lay on yon ice-shaft, steep and far,
Where stood one bold, triumphant star,

And he would dare the gleaming height,
Would see the death-bed of the day,
Whatever fate might make of it.
A foolish thing, yet were it fit
That he who dared to love, to say,
To live, should look the last of Light
Full in the face, then go his way
All silent into lasting night
As he had left her, on her height?

XVII

He climbed, he climbed, he neared at last
The Golden Fleece of flitting Light!
When sudden as an eagle's flight—
An eagle frightened from its nest
That crowns the topmost, rock-reared crest—
It swooped, it drooped, it, dying, passed.

XVIII

As when some sunny, poppy day
The Mariposa scatters gold
The while he takes his happy flight,
Like star dust when the day is old,
So passed his Light and all was night.

XIX

Some star-like scattered flecks of gold
Flashed from the far and fading wings
That kept the sky, like living things—
Then oh, the cold, the cruel cold!

The light, the life of him had past,
The spirit of the day had fled;
The lover of God's first-born, Light,
Descended, mourning for his dead.
The last of light, the very last
He deemed that he should look upon
Until God's everlasting dawn
Beyond this dread half year of night
Had fled forever from his sight.

XX

'Twas death to go, thrice death to stay.
Turn back, go southward, seek the sun?
Yea, better die in search of light,
Die boldly, face set forth for day,
As many dauntless men have done,
Than wail at fate and house with night.

XXI

Some woolly dogs, a low, dwarf-chief—
His trained thews stood him now in stead—
Broad snow-shoes, skins, a laden sled.—
That moon was as a brazen thief
That dares to mock, laugh, and carouse!
It followed, followed everywhere;
He hid his face, that moon was there.
Such painful light, such piteous pain!
It broke into his very brain,
As breaks a burglar in a house.

XXII

Scarce seen, a change came, slow, so slow!
That moon sank slowly out of sight,
The lower world of gleaming white
Took on a somber band of woe,
A wall of umber 'round about,
So dim at first you could but doubt,
That change there was, day after day—
Nay, nay, not day, I can but say
Sleep after sleep, sleep after sleep—
That band grew darker, deep, more deep,
Until there girt a dense dark wall,
A low, black wall of ebon hue,
Oppressive, deathlike as a pall;
It walked with you, close compassed you,
While not one thread of light shot through.
Above the black a gird of brown
Soft blending into amber hue,
And then from out the cobalt blue
Great, massive, golden stars swung down
Like tow'rd lights of mountain town.

XXIII

At last the moon moved gaunt and slow,
Half veiled her hollow, hungry face
In amber, kept unsteady pace
High up her star-set wall of snow,
Nor scarcely deigned to look below.

XXIV

Then far beyond, above the night,
Above the umber, amber hue,
Above the lean moon's blare and blight,
One mighty ice shaft shimmered through;
One gleaming peak, as white, as lone
As you could think the great white throne
Stood up against the cobalt blue,
And kept companion with the stars
Despite dusk walls or umber bars.

XXV

That wall, that hideous prison wall,
That blackness, umber, amber hue,
It cumbers you, encircles you,
It mantles as a hearse's pall.
Your eyes lift to the star-pricked sky,
You lift your frosted face, you pray
That e'en the sickly moon might stay
A time, if but to see you die.
Yet how it blinds you, body, soul!
You can no longer keep control.
Your feebled senses fall astray:
You cannot think, you dare not say.

XXVI

And now such under gleam of light,
Such blazing, flaming, frightful glare;
Such sudden, deadly, lightning gleam,
Some like a monstrous, mad nightmare—

Such hideous light, born of such night!
It burst, with changeful interval,
From out the ice beneath the wall,
From out the groaning, surging stream
That breathed, or tried to breathe, in vain,
That struggled, strangled, shrieked with pain!
'Twas as if he of Patmos read,
Sat by with burning pen and said,
With piteous and prophetic voice,
"The earth shall pass with rustling noise."

XXVII

Swift out the ice-crack, fiery red,
Swift up the umber wall and back,
Then 'round and 'round, up, down and back,
The sudden lightning sped and sped,
Until the walls hung burnished red,
An instant red, then yellow, white,
With something more than earthly light.

XXVIII

It blinds your eyes until they burn,
Until you dare not look or turn,
But think of him who saw and told
The story of, the glory of,
The jasper walls, the streets of gold,
Where trails God's unseen garments' hem
The holy New Jerusalem.

XXIX

Then while he trudged he tried to think—
And then another sudden light,
Or red or yellow, blue or white,
Burst up from out the very brink
Of where he passed and, left or right,
It burnished yet again the walls!
Then up, straight up against the stars
That seemed as jostled, rent with jars!
Then silent night. Where next and when?
Then blank, black interval, and then—
And oh, those blank, dread intervals,
This writing on the umber walls!

XXX

The blazing Borealis passed,
The umber walls fell down at last
And left the great cathedral stars,—*
The five-horned stars, blent, burnished bars
Of gold, red, gleaming, blinding gold—
And still the cold, the killing cold!

*I named the great stars that seemed to perch on the peaks and steeps close at either hand as we ascended the ice floor of the Yukon, "Cathedral stars" simply because they looked it at the time, although ordinarily they seemed to be normal stars, except that they were incredibly large and their five horns far brighter than rays of the sun. But when a seam or stream of flame would burst from the edge of the river's bed and suddenly take possession, for a few seconds, of heaven and earth, they would flare up like things of life, their five horns of gold pointing straight up like cathedral spires. Then as suddenly all would be black, umber, amber, cobalt, and the great, glittering stars again would be normal. I had, to my dismay, as a hired scribe when trying to get from Klondike

to the Bering Sea by way of the Yukon—1897—found the river closed at the edge of the Arctic circle. It was nearly two thousand miles to the sea, all ice and snow, with not so much as a dog-track before me and only midnight 'round about me. There was nothing to do but to try to get back to my cabin on the Klondike. In the line of my employment I kept a journal of the solitary seventy-two days and nights—mostly night—spent in the silent and terrible ascent of the savage sea of ice. But enough; a tithe of the scenes, the colors, the unnatural phenomena in these lines would be weary work and dreary reading. Nor have I time or disposition, even in this note, to explain, urge or argue.

Briefly, then, "The Borealis race," as seen even by Burns in Scotland, is a substance. It is not only visible and varied, but it is tangible and subject to the law of gravitation, although a certain, or rather uncertain, sort of electricity. It is born of friction; yet it is as cold as the electric force which we have harnessed is hot; and I believe that a full charge of it, when suddenly bursting from a rent or fissure in the ice, is deadly; else why do the dogs fall down and whine when they hear and see it shoot up too near at hand?

I can no more account for the manifold colors than I can for the little gathering of cardinal hues when you smite the transparent ice covering a lake or river. I can only say that it would take the keen eyes of a Lyons silk-weaver to distinguish and name the colors that burst up through the ice from the groaning, grinding waters of the Yukon; but the prevailing colors are positive; that is, red, yellow, saffron, crimson and so on. And these seem most forceful if they do not burst forth at an angle and collide and carrom and burnish the walls 'round about. They seem to influence the stars, as they leap up, up and up. But the colder colors seem more slow and heavy. I once saw a slanting, steel-colored column break overhead and fall to pieces right in my path. It lay like a dull, mobile smoke on the snow for some seconds. As the dogs sat down and whined, I jerked off a glove and tried to take some of it in my hand. I may have fancied it, but it seemed to sting and tingle like a little battery; and it surely was as cold as death.

I spent some time with the Bishop of Selkirk, on Mission Island, trying to get some light on all this, for he had been hereabouts for near thirty years; but the good man seemed to depend on what he had read, rather than what he had seen,

contenting himself with admiring the works of God and the glory of it all. He gave me his London book, "The Bible Under the Northern Lights," from which I have pilfered generously.

When I told him that I had come to a positive conclusion on the points set down, he said: "Well, maybe it all comes from friction, but you must know that the same phenomena is seen at Great Slave Lake, as well as on the seas of northern Greenland. No, it is as well to say that it is all the glory of God."

XXXI

The moon resumed all heaven now,
She shepherded the stars below
Along her wide, white steeps of snow,
Nor stooped nor rested, where or how.
She bared her full white breast, she dared
The sun e'er show his face again.
She seemed to know no change, she kept
Carousal constantly, nor slept,
Nor turned aside a breath, nor spared
The fearful meaning, the mad pain,
The weary eyes, the poor, dazed brain
That came at last to feel, to see
The dread, dead touch of lunacy.

XXXII

How loud the silence! Oh, how loud!
How more than beautiful the shroud
Of dead Light in the moon-mad north
When great torch-tipping stars stand forth
Above the black, slow-moving pall
As at some fearful funeral!

XXXIII

The moon blares as mad trumpets blare
To marshaled warriors long and loud:
The cobalt blue knows not a cloud,
But oh, beware that moon, beware
Her ghostly, graveyard, moon-mad stare!

XXXIV

Beware white silence more than white!
Beware the five-horned starry rune;
Beware the groaning gorge below;
Beware the wide, white world of snow,
Where trees hang white as hooded nun—
No thing not white, not one, not one,
But most beware that mad white moon.

XXXV

All day, all day, all night, all night—
Nay, nay, not yet or night or day.
Just whiteness, whiteness, ghastly white
Made doubly white by that mad moon
And strange stars jangled out of tune!

XXXVI

At last he saw, or seemed to see,
Above, beyond, another world.
Far up the ice-hung path there curled
A red-veined cloud, a canopy
That topt the fearful ice-built peak
That seemed to prop the very porch

Of God's house; then, as if a torch
Burned fierce, there flashed a fiery streak,
A flush, a blush on heaven's cheek!

XXXVII

The dogs sat down, men sat the sled
And watched the flush, the blush of red.
The little woolly dogs they knew,
Yet scarce knew what they were about.
They thrust their noses up and out,
They drank the Light, what else to do?
Their little feet, so worn, so true,
Could scarce keep quiet for delight.
They knew, they knew, how much they knew,
The mighty breaking up of night!
Their bright eyes sparkled with such joy
That they at last should see loved Light!
The tandem sudden broke all rule,
Swung back, each leaping like a boy
Let loose from some dark, ugly school—
Leaped up and tried to lick his hand—
Stood up as happy children stand.

XXXVIII

How tenderly God's finger set
His crimson flower on that height
Above the battered walls of night!
A little space it flourished yet,
And then His angel, His first-born,
Burst through, as on that primal morn!

XXXIX

His right hand held a sword of flame,
His left hand javelins of light;
And swift down, down, right down he came!
His bright wings wide as the wide sky,
And right and left, and hip and thigh,
He smote the marshaled hosts of night
With all his majesty and might.

XL

The scared moon paled and she forgot
Her pomp and pride and turned to fly.
The ice-heaved palisades, the high
Heaved peaks that propped God's house, the stars
That flamed above the prison bars,
As battle stars with fury fraught,
Were burned to ruin and were not.

XLI

Then glad earth shook her raiment wide,
And free and far, and stood up tall,
As some proud woman, satisfied,
Forgets, and yet remembers all.
She stood exultant, till her form,
A queen above some battle storm,
Blazed with the glory, the delight
Of battle with the hosts of night.
And night was broken. Light at last
Lay on the Yukon. Night had passed.

CANTO III

I

The days grew longer, stronger, yet
The strong man grew then as a child.
Too hard the tension and too wild
The terror; he could not forget.
And now at last when Light was, now
He could not see nor lift his eyes,
Nor lift a hand in any wise.
It was as when a race is won
By some strong favorite athlete,
Then sinks down dying at your feet.

II

The red chief led him on and on
To his high lodge by gorged Yukon
And housed him kindly as his own,
Blind, broken, dazed, and so alone!

III

The low bark lodge was desolate,
And deathly cold by night, by day.
Poor, hungered children of the snows,
They heaped the fire as he froze,
Did all they could, yet what could they
But pity his most piteous fate
And pitying, silent, watch and wait?

IV

His face was ever to the wall
Or buried in his skins; the light—
He could not bear the light of day
Nor bear the heaped-up flame at night—
Not bear one touch of light at all.
There are no pains, no sharp death throes,
So dread as blindness of the snows.

V

He thought of home, he thought of her,
Thought most of her, and pictured how
She walked in springtime splendor where
Warm sea winds twined her heavy hair
In great Greek braids piled fold on fold,
Or loosely blown, as poppy's gold.

VI

And then he thought of her afar
Mid follies, and his soul at war
With self, self will, and iron fate
Grew as a blackened thing of hate!
And then he prayed forgiveness, prayed
As one in sin and sore afraid.

VII

And praying so he dreamed, he dreamed
She sat there looking in his face,
Sat silent by in that dread place,
Sat silent weeping, so it seemed,

Sat still, sat weeping silently.
He saw her tears and yet he knew,
The blind man knew he could not see,
Scarce hope to see for years and years.
And then he seemed to hear her tears,
To hear them steal her loose hair through
And gently fall, as falls the dew
And still, small rain of summer morn,
That makes for harvests, yellow corn.

VIII

He raised his hand, he touched her hair;
He did not start, he did not say;
It seemed that she was surely there;
He only questioned would she stay.
How glad he was! Why, now, what care
For hunger, blindness, blinding pain,
Could he but touch her hair again?

IX

He heard her rise, give quick command
To patient, skin-clad, savage men
To heap the wood, come, go, and then
Go feed their woolly friends at hand,
To bring fresh stores, still heap fresh flame,
Then go, then come, as morning came.

X

All seemed so real! He dared not stir,
Lest he might break this dream of her.
How holy, holy sweet her voice,
Like benediction o'er the dead!

So glad he was, so grateful he,
And thanking God most fervently,
Forgot his plight, forgot his pain,
And deep at heart did he rejoice;
Yet prayed he might not wake again
To peril, blindness, piteous pain.

XI

Then, as he hid his face, she came
And leaned quite near and took his hand.
'Twas cold, 'twas very cold, 'twas thin
And bony, black, just skin and bone,
Just bone and wrinkled mummy-skin.
She held it out against the flame,
Then pressed it with her two warm hands.
It seemed as she could feel the sands
Of life slow sift to shadow land.
Close on his hurt eyes she laid hand,
The while she, wearied, nodded, slept.
The flame burned low, the wind's wild moan
Awakened her. Cold as a stone
His starved form, shrunken to a shade,
Stretched in the darkness, and, dismayed,
She put the robes back and she crept
Close down beside and softly laid
Her warm, strong form to his and slept,
The while her dusk men vigil kept.

XII

That long, long night, that needed rest!
Then flames at morn; her precious store
Heaped hard by on the earthen floor
While mute brown men, starved men, stood by

To wait the slightest breath or sigh
Or sign of wakening request—
What silence, patience, trust! What rest!
Of all good things, I say the best
Beneath God's sun is rest, and—rest.

XIII

She slowly wakened from her sleep
To find him sleeping, silent, deep!
What food for all, what feast for all,
To chief or slave, or great or small,
Ranged round the flaming, glowing heap—
Such lank, lean flank, such hungry zest!
Such reach of limb, such rest, such rest!

XIV

Why, he had gone, had gladly gone
In quest of his eternal Light,
Beyond all dolours, that dread night,
Had she not reached her hand and drawn,
Hard drawn him back and held him so,
Held him so hard he could not go.
And yet he lingered by the brink,
As dulled and dazed as you can think—
Long, long he lingered, helpless lay,
A babe, a broken pot of clay.

XV

She made a broader couch, she sat
All day beside and held his hand
Lest he might sudden slip away.
And she all night beside him lay,

Lest these last grains of sinking sand
Might in the still night slip and pass,
With none at hand to turn the glass.

XVI

And did the red men prate thereat?
Why, they had laid them down and died
For her, those simple dusky sons
Of nature, children of the snows,
Born where the ice-bound river runs,
Born where the Arctic torrent flows.
Look you for evil? Look for ill
Or good, you find just what you will.

XVII

He spake no more than babe might speak:
His eyes were as the kitten's eyes
That open slowly with surprise
Then close as if to sleep a week;
But still he held, as if he knew,
The warm, strong hand, the healthful hand,
The dauntless, daring hand and true,
Nor, while he waked, would his unfold,
But held, as drowning man might hold
Who hopes no more of life or land,
But, as from habit, clutches hand.

XVIII

Once, as she thought he surely slept,
She slowly drew herself aside,
He thrust his hand as terrified,
Caught back her hand, kissed it and wept.

Then she, too, wept, wept tears like rain,
Her first warm, welcome happy tears,
Drew in her breath, put by her fears
And knew she had not dared in vain.

XIX

Yet day by day, hard on the brink
He hung with half-averted head,
As silent, listless, as the dead,
As sad to see as you can think.
Their lorn lodge sat the terraced steep
Above the wide, wild, groaning stream
That, like some monster in a dream,
Cried out in broken, breathless sleep;
And looking down, night after night,
She saw leap forth that sword of Light.

XX

She guessed, she knew the flaming sword
That turned which way to watch and ward
And guard the wall and ever guard
The Tree of Life, as it is writ.
The hand, the hilt, she could not see,
Nor yet the true, life-giving tree,
Nor cherubim that cherished it,
But yet she saw the flaming sword,
As written in the Book, the Word.

XXI

She held his hand, he did not stir,
And as she nightly sat and sat,
She silent gazed and guessed thereat.

His fancies seemed to come to her;
She could not see the Tree of Life,
How fair it grew or where it grew,
But this she knew and surely knew,
That gleaming sword meant holy strife
To keep and guard the Tree of Life.

XXII

Oh, flaming sword, rest not nor rust!
The Tree of Life is hewn and torn,
The Tree of Life is bowed and worn,
The Tree of Life is in the dust.
Hew brute man down, hew branch and root,
Till he may spare the Tree of Life,
The pale, the piteous woman, wife—
Till he shall learn, as learn he must,
To lift her fair face from the dust.

XXIII

She watched the wabbly moose at morn
Climb steeply up the further steep,
Huge, solitary and forlorn.
She saw him climb, turn, look and keep
Scared watch, this wild, ungainly beast,
This mateless, lost thing and the last
That roamed before and since the flood—
That climbed and climbed the topmost hill
As if he heard the deluge still.

XXIV

The sparse, brown children of the snow
Began to stir, as sap is stirred

In springtime by the song of bird,
And trudge by, wearily and slow,
Beneath their load of dappled skins
That weighed them down as weighty sins.

XXV

And oft they paused, turned and looked back
Along their desolate white track,
With arched hand raised to shield their eyes—
Looked back as if for something lost
Or left behind, of precious cost,
Sad-eyed and silent, mutely wise,
As just expelled from Paradise.

XXVI

How sad their dark, fixed faces seemed,
As if of long-remembered sins!
They listless moved, as if they dreamed,
As if they knew not where to go
In all their wide, white world of snow.
She could but think upon the day
God made them garments from the skins
Of beasts, then turned and bade them go,
Go forth as willed they, to and fro.

XXVII

Between the cloud-capt walls of snow
A wide-winged raven, croaking low,
Passed and repassed, each weary day,
And would not rest, not go, not stay,
But ever, ever to and fro,

As when forth from the ark of old;
And ever as he passed, each day
Let fall one croak, so cold, so cold
It seemed to strike the ice below
And break in fragments hard as fate;
It fell so cold, so desolate.

XXVIII

At last the sun hung hot and high,
Hung where that heartless moon had hung.
A dove-hued moose bird sudden sung
And had glad answerings hard by;
The icy steeps began to pour
Mad tumult down the rock-built steep.
The great Yukon began to roar,
As if with pain in broken sleep.
The breaking ice began to groan,
The very mountains seemed to moan.

XXIX

Then, bursting like a cannon's boom,
The great stream broke its icy bands,
And rushed and ran with outstretched hands
That laid hard hold the willow lands,
Rent wide the somber, gopher gloom
And roared for room, for room, for room!

XXX

The stalwart moose climbed hard his steep,
Climbed till he wallowed, brisket deep,
In soft'ning, sinking steeps of snow,
Then raging, turned to look below.

XXXI

He tossed, shook high his antlered head,
Blew blast on blast through his huge nose,
Then, wild with savage rage and fright,
He climbed, climbed to the highest height,
As if he felt the flood once more
Had come to swallow sea and shore.

XXXII

The waters sank, the man uprose,
A boat of skins, his Eskimo,
Then down from out the world of snow
They passed tow'rd seas of calm repose
Where wide sails waited, warm sea wind,
For mango isles and tamarind.

* * * *

XXXIII

What wonders ward these Arctic seas!
What dread, dumb, midnight days are these!
A wonder world of night and light;
A land of blackness blent with white,
A land of water, ices, snow,
Where ice is emperor and floe
And berg and pack and jam and drift
Forever grind and gnaw and lift
And tide about the bleak North Pole—
Where bull whales bellow, blow and blow
Great rainbows in their lover's quest
With all a sunland lover's zest!

A land of contradictions and
A desolated dead man's land!
A land of neither life nor soul;
A land where isles on isles of bone
And totem towns lie lifeless, lone—
Their tombstones just a totem pole.

XXXIV

Their cedar boat deep ballasted
With bags of bleak, Koyukuk's gold,
An ancient Bedford salt at head,
Drives through the ice floes, jolly, bold!
What isles! Saghalien beyond,
Bleak, blown Saghalien, where bear
And wild men are as one and share
Their caves and shaggy coats of hair
In close affection, warm and fond.
At least, so ran the jolly tale
Of him who steered them on and on
Tow'rd Saghalien from far Yukon—
This Bedford salt who lassoed whales,
Or said he did, of largest size,
And so, according, made his tales
Of whales to fit in size his lies,
The while they sailed tow'rd Saghalien.

XXXV

What worlds, these wild Aleutian Isles!
What wonder worlds, unnamed, unknown!
They lift a thousand icy miles
From Unalaska, bleak and lone
And bare as icebergs anywhere,

Save where the white fox, black fox, red,
Starts from his ice and snow-built bed,
And like some strange bird flits the air.
You sometimes see the white sea bear,
A mother seal with babe asleep
Held close to breast in careful keep,
And hear a thousand sea birds scream
And see the wide-winged albatross
In silence bear his shadow cross
As still and restful as a dream—
Naught else is here; here life is not;
'Tis as the land that God forgot.

XXXVI

And yet it was not always so;
This old salt tells a thousand tales
Of love and joy, of weal and woe,
That happened in the long ago
When reindeer ranged the mossy vales
That dot this thousand miles of isles;
That here the fond Aleutian maid,
With naught to fright or make afraid,
Lived, loved and silent went her way
As yon swift albatross in grey.
But totem towns have naught to say
Of all her tears and all her smiles.

XXXVII

And this, one of so many tales,
This Bedford salt in quest of whales!
He tells of one once favored isle
Far out, a full five hundred mile,

Where dwelt a Russian giant, knave,
A pirate, priest, and all in one,
With many wives, and reindeer white
As Saint Elias in the sun;
Yet every wife was as a slave
To herd his white deer night by night
And day by day to pluck away
Each hair that was not perfect white.

XXXVIII

"And," says this bearded Bedford salt,
This man of whales and wondrous tales
Of seas of ice and Arctic gales,
This truthful salt without one fault—
"White reindeer's milk is yellow gold
And he who drinks it lives for aye;
He will not drown, he cannot die,
Nor hunger, thirst, nor yet grow cold,
But live and live a thousand lives —
Ten thousand deer, two thousand wives.

XXXIX

"And what the end?" He turns his quid,
This ancient, sea-baked, Bedford man—
"The thing blowed up, you bet it did,
A bloomin' big volcano, and
So bright that you can stand and write
Your log most any bloomin' night,
Five hundred miles away to-day.
Them deers? They're now the milky way."

But now enough of hairy men,
Of monstrous beasts before the flood,
White Arctic chine, black gopher wood,
Of flower-fed skies, of ice-sown seas;
Come, let us court love-land again.
Behold, how good is love, how fair!
Behold, how fair is love, how good!
A sense of burning sandalwood
Is in my nostrils and the air
Is redolent of cherry trees
Red, pink, and brown with Nippon bees.

BOOK THIRD

CANTO I

I

Of all fair trees to look upon,
Of all trees "pleasant to the sight,"
Give me the Poet's tree of white—
Pink cherry trees of blest Nippon
With lovers passing to and fro—
Pink cherry lanes of Tokio:
Ten thousand cherry trees and each
Hung white with Poet's plaint and speech.

II

Of all fair lands to look upon,
To feel, to breathe, at Orient dawn,
I count this baby land the best,
Because here all things rest and rest
And all men love all things most fair
And beautiful and rich and rare;
And women are as cherry trees
With treasures laden, brown with bees.

III

Of all loved lands to look upon,
Give me this love land of Nippon,
Its bright, brave men, its maids at prayer,
Its peace, its carelessness of care.

IV

A mobile sea of silver mist
Sweeps up for morn to mount upon:
Then yellow, saffron, amethyst—
Such changeful hues has blest Nippon!
See but this sunrise, then forget
All scenes, all suns, all lands save one,
Just matin sun and vesper sun;
This land of inland seas of light;
This land that hardly recks of night.

V

The vesper sun of blest Nippon
Sinks crimson in the Yellow Sea:
The purple butterfly is gone,
The rainbow bird housed in his tree—
Hushed, as the last loved, trembling note
Still thrills his tuneful Orient throat—
Hushed, as the harper's weary hand
Waits morn to waken and command.

VI

Fast homeward bound, brown, busy feet
In wooden shoon clang up the street;
But not through all the thousand year
In Buddha's temple may you hear
One step, see hue of sun or sea,
Though wait you through eternity:
All is so still, so soft, subdued—
The very walls are hueless hued.

VII

Behold brown, kneeling penitents!
What perfumed place of silent prayer!
Burned Senko-ho, sweet frankincense!
And hear what silence everywhere!
Pale, pensive priests pass here and there
And silent lisp with bended head
The Golden Rule on scrolls of gold
As gentle, ancient Buddhists read
These precepts sacred unto them,
And watched the world grow old, so old,
Ere yet the Babe of Bethlehem.

VIII

How leaps the altar's forky flame!
How dreamful, dense, the sweet incense,
As pale priests burn, in Buddha's name,
Red-written sins of penitents —
Mute penitents with bended head
And unsaid sins writ deep in red.

IX

Now slow a priest with staff and scroll,
Barefoot, as mendicant, and old—
You sudden start, you lift your head,
You hear and yet you do not hear,
A sound, a song, so sweet, so dear
It well might waken yonder dead.
His staff has touched the sacred bowl

Of copper, silver, shot with gold
And wrought so magic-like of old
That all sweet sounds, or east or west,
Sought this still hollow where to rest.
Hear, hear the voice of Buddha's bell,
Bonsho-no-oto! All is well!

X

And you, you, lean, lean low to hear:
You doubt your ears, you doubt your eyes,
Your hand is lifted to your ear,
You fear, how cruelly you fear
The melody may die—it dies—
Dies as the swan dies, as the sun
Dies, bathed in dewy benison.

XI

It lives again; you breathe again!
What cadences that speak, that stir,
Take form and presence, as of her
Whom first you loved, ere yet of men.
It utters essence as a sound;
As Santalum sends from the ground
For devotee and worshipper
Where saints lie buried, balm and myrrh.

XII

But now so low, so faint, so low
You lean to hear yet hardly hear.
Again your hand is to your ear,
Your lips are parted, leaning so,

And now again you catch your breath!
Such breath as when you lie becalmed
At sea, and sudden start to feel
A cooling wave and quickened keel
And see your tall sail court the shore.
You hear, you more than hear, you feel,
As when the white wave shimmereth.
Your love is at your side once more,
An essence of some song embalmed,
Long hidden in the house of death—
You breathe it, as your Lady's breath!

XIII

Now low, so low, so soft, so still,
As when a single leaf is stirred,
As when some doubtful matin bird
Dreams russet morning decks his hill—
Then nearer, clearer, lilts each note
And longer, stronger, swells each wave—
Ten thousand dead have burst the grave,
An angel's song in every throat!
The forky flame turns and returns
To burn and burn red sins away;
Such incense on the altar burns
As some may breathe but none may say,
Though cherished to their dying day.

XIV

And now the sandaled pilgrims fall
With faces to the jeweled floor—
The incense darkens as a pall,
As clouds that darken more and more.

You dare not lift your bended head—
The silence is as if the dead
Alone had passed the temple door.
And now the Bonsho notes, the song!
So stronger now, so strong, so strong!

XV

The black smokes of the ashen urn
Where brown priests burn red sins away
Begin to stir, to start, to turn,
To seek the huge, bossed copper door—
As evil things that dare not stay.
The while the rich notes roll and roar
To drive dread, burned sin out before
Calm Dia-busta, the adored,
As cherubim with flaming sword.

XVI

And far, so far, such rich notes roll
That barefoot fishers far at sea
Fall prone and pray all silently
For wife and babes that wait the strand,
The tugging net clutched tight in hand,
The while they bow a space to pray;
For every asking, eager soul
Knows well the time and patiently
It lists, an hundred Ri away.

XVII

The thousand pilgrims girt in straw
That press Fujame's holy peak,
Prone, fasting, penitent and meek,

Hear notes as from the stars and pray,
As we who know and keep the Law—
As we who walk Jerusalem
With pilgrim step and pallid cheek.
How earnestly they silent pray
To keep their Golden Rule alway,
To do no thing, or night or day,
Though tempted by a diadem,
They would not others do to them!

XVIII

And wee, brown wives, on high, wild steeps
Of terraced rice or bamboo patch
Where toil, hard toil incessant, keeps
Sweet virtue, sweet sleep, and a thatch,
They hear and hold, with closer fold,
Their bare, brown babes against the cold.
They croon and croon, with soothing care,
To babes meshed in their mighty hair,
And loving, crooning, breathe a prayer.

XIX

The great notes pass, pass on and on,
As light sweeps up the doors of dawn,
And now the strong notes are no more,
But feebler tones wail out and cry,
As sad things that have lost their way
At night and dare not bide the day
But turn back to the shrine to die,
And steal in softly through the door
And gently fade along the floor.

XX

The barefoot priest slow fades from sight,
Faint and more faint the last notes fall;
You hear them now, then not at all,
And now the last note of the night
Wails out, as when a lover cries
At night, and at the altar dies.

XXI

How sweet, how sad, how piteous sweet
This last note at the bowed monk's feet
That dies as dies some saintly light—
That dies so like the sweet swan dies—
So loving sad, so tearful sweet,
This last, lost note—Good night, good night.
Good night to holy Buddha's bell—
Bonsho-no-oto! All is well—
A mist is rising to the eyes!

CANTO II

I

This water town of Tokio
Is as a church with priests at prayer,
With restful silence everywhere,
Or night or day, or high or low.
You sometimes hear a turtle dove,
A locust trilling from his tree
In chorus with his mated love,
May see a raven in the air,

Wide-winged and high, but even he
Is as a shadow in the stream,
As dreamful, silent as a dream.

II

They could but note the silent maids
That carried, with a mother's care,
The silent baby, ofttimes bare
As birthtime through their Caran shades.
Ten thousand babies, everywhere,
But not one wail, or day or night,
To put the locust's love to flight,
Or mar the chorus of the dove.
And why? Why, they were born of love:
Born soberly, born sanely, clean,
As Indian babes of old were born
Ere yet the white man's face was seen,
Ere yet the sensuous white man came;
Born clean as love, of lovelight born
Some long lost Rocky Mountain morn
Where snow-topt turrets first took flame
And flashed God's image in God's name!

III

Tell me, my flint-scarred pioneer,
My skin-clad Carson, mountaineer,
Who met red Sioux, met dusk Modoc,
Red hand to hand in battle shock
Where men but met to dare and die,
Did ever you once see or hear
One poor brown Indian baby cry?

IV

The long, hot march by ashen plain,
The burning trail by lava bed,
Babes lashed to back in corded pain
Until the swollen bare legs bled,
But on and on their mothers led,
If but to find a place to die.
Yet who, of all men that pursued
This dying race, year after year,
By burning plain or beetling wood,
Did ever see, did ever hear,
One bleeding Indian baby cry?

V

The starving mother's breasts were dry,
There scarce was time to stop and drink,
The swollen legs grew black as ink—
There was not even time to die.
And yet, through all this fifty year,
What hounding man did ever hear
One piteous Indian baby cry?

VI

Nay, they were born as men were born
Far back in Jacob's Bible morn;
Were born of love, born lovingly,
Unlike the fretful child of lust,
When love gat love and trust gat trust—
And trusting, dared to silent die
In torture and disdain a tear,

If mother willed, nor question why.
Yea, I have seen so many die,
This cruel, hard, half-hundred year,
And I have cried, to see, to hear—
But never heard one baby cry.

VII

Shot down in Castle Rocks I lay
One midnight, lay as one shot dead,
A lad, and lone, years, years of yore.
I heard deep Sacramento roar,
Saw Shasta glitter far away—
I never saw such moon before
And yet I could not turn my head,
Nor move my lips to cry or say.
Red arrows in both form and face
Held form and face tight pinned in place
Against the gnarled, black chaparral,
As one fast nailed against a wall
With scant half room to wholly fall—
The hot, thick, gurgling, gasping breath,
The thirst, the thirsting unto death!

VIII

And then a child against my feet
Crawled feebly and crept close to die;
I moaned, "Oh baby, won't you cry?
'Twould be as music piteous sweet
To hear in this dread place of death
Just one lorn cry, just one sweet breath
Of life, here 'mid the moonlit dead,
The mingled dead, white men and red.

IX

"Oh, bleeding, blood-red baby, cry
Just once before I, choking die!
And maybe some white man will hear
In yonder fortressed camp anear
And bring blest drink for you and I—
Oh, baby, please, please, baby, cry!"

X

A crackling in the chaparral
And then a lion in the clear
From which the dying babe had crept,
Swift as a yellow sunbeam, leapt
And stood so tall, so near, so near!
So cruel near, so sinuous, tall—
Some Landseer's picture on a wall.

XI

I never saw such length of limb,
Such arm as God had given him!
His paws, they swallowed up the earth,
His midnight eyes shot arrows out
The while his tail whipped swift about—
His tail was surely twice his girth!

XII

His nostrils wide with smell of blood
Reached out above us where he stood
And snuffed the dank, death-laden air

Till half his yellow teeth were bare.
His yellow length was bare and lank—
I never saw such hollow flank;
'Twas as a grave is, as a pall,
A flabby black flank—scarce at all!

XIII

He sudden quivered, tail to jaws,
Crouched low, unsheathed his shining claws—
"Oh, baby, baby, won't you cry,
Just once before we two must die?"
I felt him spring, clutch up, then leap
Swift down the rock-built, broken steep;
I heard a crunch of bones, but I—
I did not hear that baby cry!

CANTO III

I

I would forget—help me forget,
The while we fondly linger yet
The flower-field so sweet, so sweet,
With Buddha at fair Fuji's feet.
Fair Fuji-san, throned Queen of air!
Fair woman pure as maiden's prayer;
As pure as prayer to the throne
Of God, as lone as God, as lone
As Buddha at her feet in prayer—
Fair Fuji-san, so more than fair!

II

Fair Fuji-san, Kamkura, and
Reposeful, calm Buddha the blest,
With folded hands that rest and rest
On eld Kamkura's blood-soaked sand.
Here russet apples hang at hand
So russet rich that when they fall
'Tis as if some gold-bounden ball
Sank in the loamy, warm, wet sand
Where hana, kusa, carpet-earth
That never knows one day of dearth.

III

Kamkura, where Samurai bled,
Where Buddha sits to rest and rest!
Was ever spot so beauteous, blest?
Was ever red rose quite so red?

IV

Fair Fuji from her mountain chine
Above her curtained courts of pine
Looks down on calm Kamkura's sea
So tranquil, dreamful, restfully
You fold your arms across your breast
And rest with her, with Buddha rest,
While silence musks the warm sea air—
Just silence, silence everywhere.

V

Here midst this rest, this pure repose,
This benediction, peace, and prayer,
That as religion was, and where
A breath of senko blessed the air,
The erstwhile children of the snows
Came silently and sat them down
Within a Kusa coigne that lay
Above the buried Bushi town,
Above the dimpled, beauteous Bay
Of sun and shadow, gold and brown,
And Care blew by the other way—
A breath, a butterfly, a fay.

VI

And one was as fair as Fuji, fair,
True, trusting as some maid at prayer,
Aye, one as Buddha was, but one
Was turbulent of blood and was
An instant of the earth and sun;
As when the ice-tied torrent thaws
And sudden leaps from frost and snow
Headlong and lawless, far below—
As when the sap flows suddenly
And warms the wind-tost mango tree.

VII

He caught her hand, he pressed her side,
He pressed her close and very close,
He breathed her as you breathe a rose,

Nor was in any wise denied.
Her comely, shapely limbs pushed out
As elden on her golden shore;
Her long, strong arms reached round about
And bent along the flowered floor,
While full length on her back she lay
Like some wild, beauteous beast at play.

VIII

He thrust him forward, caught her, caught
Her form as if she were of naught.
His outstretched face was as a flame,
His breath was as a furnace is,
He kissed her mouth with such mad kiss
Her rich, full lips shut tight with shame.

IX

As one of old who tilled the mould,
Took triple strength from earth and thrust
His burly foeman to the dust,
She sprang straight up, and springing threw
Him from her with such voltage he
Knew not how he might, writhing, rise,
Or dare to meet again those eyes
That seemed to burn him through and
through;
Or daring, how could he undo
His coward, selfish deed of shame
Enforced as in religion's name?
And she so trustful, so alone!
'Twas as if some sweet, sacred nun
Had opened wide her door to one
Who slew her on her altar stone.

X

She passed and silent passed and slow.
What strength, what length of limb, what eyes!
She left him lying low, so low,
So crested and so surely slain
He deemed he never more might rise,
Or rising, see her face again.
And yet, her look was not of hate,
But pity, as akin to pain;
And when she touched the temple gate
She paused, turned, beckoned he should go,
Go wash his hands of carnal clay
And go alone his selfish way—
Forever, ever and a day!

CANTO IV

I

How cold she grew, how chilled, how changed,
Since that loathed scene by Nippon's sea!
No longer flexile, trustful, she
Held him aloof, hushed and estranged,
A fallen star, yet still her star,
And she his heaven, earth, his all,
To follow, worship, near or far,
Let good befall or ill befall.
But he was silent. He had sold
His birthright, sold for even less
Than any poor, cheap pottage mess,
His right to speak forth, warm and bold,

And look her unshamed in the face.
Mute, penitent, he kept his place,
As silent as that Nippon saint
That knew not prayer, praise, or plaint.

II

Saint Silence seems some maid of prayer,
God's arm about her when she prays
And where she prays and everywhere,
Or storm-strewn or sun-down days.
What ill to Silence can befall,
Since Silence knows no ill at all?

III

Saint Silence seems some twilight sky
That leans as with her weight of stars
To rest, to rest, no more to roam,
But rest and rest eternally.
She loosens and lets down the bars,
She brings the kind-eyed cattle home,
She breathes the fragrant field of hay
And heaven is not far away.

IV

The deeps of soul are still the deeps
Where stately Silence ever keeps
High court with calm Nirvana, where
No shallows break the noisy shore
Or beat, with sad, incessant roar,
The fettered, fevered world of care
As noisome vultures fret the air.

V

The star-sown seas of thought are still,
As when God's plowmen plant their corn
Along the mellow grooves at morn
In patient trust to wait His will.
The star-sown seas of thought are wide,
But voiceless, noiseless, deep as night;
Disturb not these, the silent seas
Are sacred unto souls allied,
As golden poppies unto bees.
Here, from the first, rude giants wrought,
Here delved, here scattered stars of thought
To grow, to bloom in years unborn,
As grows the gold-horned yellow corn.

VI

They lay low-bosomed on the bay
Of Honolulu, soft the breeze
And soft the dreamful light that lay
On Honolulu's Sabbath seas—
The ghost of sunshine gone away—
Red roses on the dust of day,
Pale, pink, red roses in the west
Where lay in state dead Day at rest.

VII

Their dusky boatman set his face
From out the argent, opal sea
Tow'rd where his once proud, warlike race
Lay housed in everlasting dust.
He sang low-voiced, sad, silently,
In listless chorus with the tide,

Because his race was not, because
His sun-born race had dared, defied
The highest, holiest of His laws
And so fell stricken and so died—
Died stricken of dread leprosy
Begot of lust—prone in the dust—
Degenerating love to lust.

VIII

Sweet sandal-wood burned bow and stern
In colored, shapely crates of clay;
Sweet sandal-wood long laid away,
Long caverned with dead battle kings
Whose dim ghosts rise betimes and burn
The torch and touch sweet taro strings—
Such giant, stalwart, stately kings!

IX

Sweet sandal-wood, long ages torn
From cloud-capt steeps where thunders slept,
Then hidden where dead giants kept
Their sealed Walhalla, waiting morn—
Deep-hidden, till such sweet perfume
Betrayed their long-forgotten tomb.

X

The sea's perfume and incense lay
About, above, lay everywhere;
The sea swung incense through the air—
The censer, Honolulu's Bay.
And then the song, the soft, low rune,
As sad, as if dead kings kept tune.

XI

The moon hung twilight from each horn,
Soft, silken twilight, soft to touch
As baby lips—and over much
Like to the baby breath of morn.
Huge, five-horned stars swung left and right
O'er argent, opal, amber night.

XII

What changeful, dreamful, ardent light,
When Mauna Loa, far afield,
Uprose and shook his yellow shield
Below the battlements of night;
Below the Southern Cross, o'er seas
That sang such silent symphonies!

XIII

Far lava peaks still lit the night,
Like holy candles foot and head,
That dimly burned above the dead,
Above the dead and buried Light.
There rose such perfume of the sea,
Such Sabbath breath, soft, silently,
As when some burning censer swings,
As when some surpliced choir sings.

XIV

He scarce had lived save in such fear,
But now yon mitered tongues of flame
That tipped the star-lit lava peak
Brought back some fervor to his cheek

And made him half forget his shame.
He could but heed, he could but hear
That call across the walls of night
From triple mitered tongues of Light,
That soulful, silent, perfumed night.
He said—and yet he said no word;
No word he said, yet all she heard,
So close their souls lay, in such Light,
That holy Honolulu night.

XV

"Lies yonder Nebo's mount, my Soul?—
The Promised Land beyond, beyond
The grave of rest, the broken bond,
Where manly force must lose control,
Must press the grapes and fill the bowl,
Go round and round, rest, rise up, eat,
Tread grapes, then wash the wearied feet?

XVI

"I know I have enough of bliss,
I know full well I should not dare
To ask a deeper joy than this,
This scene, your presence, this soft air,
This incense, this deep sense of rest
Where long-sought, sweet Arcadia lies
Against these gates of Paradise.

XVII

"And yet, hear me, I dare ask more.
Lone Adam had all Paradise

And still how poor he was, how poor,
With all things his beneath the skies!
Aye, sweet it were to roam or rest,
To ever rest and ever roam
As you might reck and reckon best;
But still there comes a sense of home,
Of hearthstone, happy babes at play,
And you and I—not far away.

XVIII

"Nay, do not turn aside your face—
'Be fruitful ye and multiply'
Meant all; it meant the human race,
And he or she shall surely die
Despised and pass to nothingness
Who does not love the little dress,
The heaven in the mother's eyes,
The holy, sacred, sweet surprise
The time she tells how truly blest,
With face laid blushing to his breast.

XIX

"How flower-like the little frock —
The daffodil forerunning spring—
The doll-like shoes, socks, everything,
And each a secret, secret stored!
And yet each day the little hoard,
As careful merchants note their stock,
Is noted with such happy care
As only angel mothers share.

XX

"At last to hear her rock and rock—
Behold her bowed Madonna face!
She lifts her baby from its place,
Pulls down the crumpled, dampened frock,
And never Cleopatra guessed
The queenliness, the joy, the pride,
She knows with baby to her breast—
His chub fists churning either sides!

XXI

"The bravest breast faith ever bared
For brother, country, creed or friend,
However high the aim or end,
Was that brave breast a baby shared
With kicking, fat legs half unfrocked,
The while sweet mother rocked and rocked."

CANTO V

I

As when first blossoms feel first bees,
As when the squirrel hoists full sail
And leaps his world of maple trees
And quirks his saucy, tossy tail;
As when Vermont's tall sugar trees
First feel sweet sap, then don their leaves
In haste—a million Mother Eves;
As when strange winds stir strong-built ships
Long ice-bound fast in Arctic seas,

So she, the strong, full woman now,
Felt new life thrilling breast and brow
And tingled to her finger tips.
Her limbs pushed out, outreached her head
As if to say—she nothing said.
But something of the tender light
That lit her girl face that first night,
The time she pulling poppies sat
The sod and saw the golden sheep
Safe housed within the hollowed deep,
Was hers; and how she blushed thereat!
Yet blushing so, still silent sat.

II

She would forget his weakness, yet
Try as she would, could not forget.
He knew her thought. She raised her head
And searched his soul, and searching said:
"He who would save the world must stand
Hard by the world with steel-mailed hand
And save by smiting hip and thigh.
The world needs truth, tall truth and grand,
And keen sword-cuts that thrust to kill.
The man who climbed the windy hill
To talk, is talking, climbing still,
And could not help or hurt a fly.
The stoutest swimmer and most wise
Swims somewhat with the sweeping stream,
Yet leads, leads unseen as a dream.
The strong fool breasts the flood and dies,
The weak fool turns his back and flies."

III

He did not answer, could not dare
Lift his shamed eyes to her fair face,
But looked right, left, looked anywhere,
And mused, mused mutely out of place:
"If yonder creedists may not teach,
For all their books, and bravely preach
That here, right here, the womb of night
Gave us God's first-born, holy Light,
Why, pity, nor yet blame them quite;
Because they know not, cannot read,
Save as commanded by some creed.
What eons they may have to wait
Within their wall, without the gate,
Nor once dare lift their eyes to look
Beyond their blinding creed and book,
We know not, but we surely know
Yon lava-lifted, star-tipt height
Is bannered still by that first Light.
We know this phosphorescent glow,
At every dip of dripping oar,
Is but lost bits of Light below,
Where moves God's spirit as of yore.
Aye, here, right here, from out the night,
God spake and said: 'Let there be light!'

IV

"And dare ask doubting, creed-made men
Why we so surely know and how?
Why here 'the waters,' now as then?
Why here 'the waters,' then as now?
We know because we read, yet read

So little that we much must heed.
We read: 'God's spirit moved upon
The waters' ere that burst of dawn.
What waters? Why, 'The Waters,' these,
These soundless, silent, sundown seas.

V

"The morning of the world was here,
'Twas here 'He made dry land appear,'
Here 'Darkness lay upon the deep.'
What deep? This deep, the deepest deep
That ever rolled beneath the sun
When night and day were then as one
And dreamless day lay fast asleep,
Rocked in this cradle of the deep."

VI

She would not, could not be denied
Her thought, her theme but turned once more,
As turns the all-devouring tide
Against a stubborn unclean shore,
With lifted face and soul aflame,
And spake as speaking in God's name—
With face raised to the living God:
"Hear me! How pitiful the plea
Of men who plead their temperance,
Of men who know not one first sense
Of self-control, yet, fire-shod,
Storm forth and rage intemperately
At sins that are but as a breath,
Compared with their low lives of death!

VII

"And oh, for prophet's tongue or pen
To scourge, not only, and accuse
The childless mother, but such men
As know their loves but to abuse!
Give me the brave, child-loving Jew,
The full-sexed Jew of either sex,
Who loves, brings forth and nothing recks
Of care or cost, as Christians do—
Dulled souls who will not hear or see
How Christ once raised his lowly head
And, all rebuking, gently said,
The while he took them tenderly,
'Let little ones come unto me.'

VIII

"The true Jew lover keeps the Way.
For clean, serene, and contrite heart
The bride and bridegroom kneel apart
Before the bridal bed and pray.

IX

"Behold how great the bride's estate!
Behold how holy, pure the thought
That high Jehovah welcomes her
In partnership, to coin, create
The fairest form He yet has wrought
Since Adam's clay knew breath and stir:
To glory in her daughters, sons;
To be God's tabernacle, tent,
The keeper of the covenant,
The mother of His little ones!

X

"Go forth among this homeless race,
This landless race that knows no place
Or name or nation quite its own,
And see their happy babes at play,
Or palace, Ghetto, rich or poor,
As thick as birds about the door
At morn, some sunny Vermont May,
Then think of Christ and these alone.
Yet ye deride, ye jeer, ye jibe,
To see their plenteous babes; ye say
'Behold the Jew and all his tribe!'

XI

"Yet Solomon upon his throne
Was not more kingly crowned than they
These Jews, these jeered Jews of to-day—
More surely born to lord, to lead,
To sow the land with Abram's seed;
Because their babes are healthful born
And welcomed as the welcome morn.

XII

"Hear me this prophecy and heed!
Except we cleanse us, kirk and creed,
Except we wash us, word and deed,
The Jew shall rule us, reign the Jew.
And just because the Jew is true,
Is true to nature, true to truth,
Is clean, is chaste, as trustful Ruth
Who stood amid the alien corn
In tears that far, dim, doubtful morn—

Who bore us David, Solomon—
The Babe, that far, first Christmas dawn.

XIII

"You shrink, are angered at my speech?
You dare avert your doubtful face
Because I name this chaste, strange race?
So be it then; there lies the beach,
And up the beach the ways divide.
I would not leave the truth untold
To win the whole world to my side,
Nor would I spare your selfish pride,
Your carnal coarseness, lustful lie,
For that would be to let you die.
Come! yonder lifts the clear, white Light
For seamen, souls sea-tost at night.

XIV

"I see the spiked Agave's plume,
The pepsin's plume, acacia's bloom
Far up beyond tall cocoa trees,
Tall tamarind and mango brown,
That gird the pretty, peaceful town.
That lane leads up, the church looks down—
There lies the ways, now which of these?
Bear with me, I must dare be true.
The nation, aye, the Christian race,
Now fronts its stern Sphynx, face to face,
And I must say, say here to you,
Whate'er the cost of love, of fame,
The Christian is a thing of shame—
Must say because you prove it true,
The better Christian is the Jew.

XV

"I know you scorn the narrow deeds
Of men who make their god of creeds—
Yon men as narrow as the miles
That bank their rare, sweet flower-fed isles,
But come, my Lost Star, come with me
To yon fond church, high-built and fair,
For God is there, as everywhere,
Or Arctic snow or argent sea."

XVI

He looked far up the mango lane
Below the wide-boughed banyan tree;
He looked to her, then looked again,
As one who tries yet could not see
But one steep, narrow, upward way:
"You said two ways, here seems but one,
Or set of moon or rise of sun,
But one way to the perfect day,
And I will go. And you must stay?"
She looked far up the steep of stone
And said: "Aye, go, but not alone."

XVII

The boat's prow pushed the cocoa shore,
The man spake not, but, leaning o'er,
Strong-armed, he drew her to his side
And was not anywise denied.
He pointed to the failing fire,
That still tipt lava peak and spire,
While stars pinned round the robe of night;
'Twas here God said, "Let there be Light!"

XVIII

A little church, a lava wall,
A soft light looking gently down,
The Light of Christ, the second light,
Where two as one passed up the town.
She gave her hand, she gave her all,
And said, as such brave women might,
With ample right, in hallowed cause:
"As it in the beginning was,
So let the man-child be full born
Of Love, of Light, the Light of Morn!"

BOOK FOUR

CANTO I

I

And which of all Hawaii's isles
Of sandal wood and singing wilds
Received and housed this maiden rare—
This bravest, best, since Eve's despair?
It matters not; enough to know
Night-blooming trumpets ever blow
Love's tuneful banner to the breeze
In chorus with the ardent seas;
That Juno walks her mountain wall
In peacock plumes the whole year through.
You hear her gaudy lover call
From dawn till dusk, then see them fall
From out the clouds far, far below,
And droop and drift slow to and fro—
Dusk rainbows blending with the dew.

II

And had he won her? He had wed,
But now it was that he must woo,
Must keep alone his widowed bed
Or sit and woo the whole night through.
He plead. He could not touch her hand;
Her eyes held anger and command
And memories of a trustful time
He would have made her muck and slime.

III

He plead his perfect life, still plead;
But spurning him she mocking said:
"You would have trailed me in the dust
In very drunkenness of lust—
And now you dare to meekly plead
Your love of Light, your studious youth,
Your strenuous toil, your quest of truth,
Your perfect life! Indeed! Indeed!

IV

"Behold the pale, wan, outworn wife
Of him who pleads his perfect life!
Her step is slow, she waits for death;
Hear, hear her wan babe's hollow cry!
He scarce can cry above a breath.
Poor babe! begotten but to die,
Or, harder fate, live feebly on,
The shame of mother, curse of state—
Half-witted, worthless, jest of fate.

V

Behold God's image, fashioned tall
As heaven, stooping down to crawl
Upon his belly as a snake,
Ere yet his sense is well awake,
Ere yet his force has come, ere yet
The child-wife knows but to regret.
And lo! the greatest is the least;
For man lies lower than the beast.

VI

"Such pity that sweet love should lie
Prone, strangled in its bed of shame,
And no man dare to publish why!
Such pity that in slain Love's name
The weak bring forth the weaker, bring
The leper, idiot, anything
That lawless passion can beget!
Sweet pity, pity for them all—
The child that cries, child-wife that dies,
The weakling that may linger yet
A feeble day to feebly fall—
As food for sword or cannon ball,
For prison wall or charity
Or fruit of gruesome gallows tree!

VII

"But pity most poor man, blind man,
Whose passions stoop him to a span.
Why, man, each well-born man was born
To dwell in everlasting morn,
To top the mountain as a tower,
A thousand years of pride and power;
To face the four winds with the face
Of youth until full length he lies—
Still God-like, even as he dies.

VIII

"Could I but teach lorn man to live,
But teach low man to truly love,

Could I but teach blind man to see,
How gladly he would turn to me
And give great thanks, and ever give
Glad heed, as to some soft-voiced dove.

IX

"The burning cities of the plain,
The high-built harlot, Babylon,
The bannered mur'ls of Rome undone,
That rose again and fell again
To ashes and to heaps of dust,
All died because man lived in vain;
Because man sold his soul to lust.

X

"And count what crimes have come of it!
I say all sins, or said or writ,
Lie gathered here in this dark pit
Of man's licentious, mad desire,
Where woman's form is ruthless thrown,
As on some sacrificial stone,
And burned as in a living fire,
To leave but ashes, rue, and ire.

XI

"Aye, even crimes as yet unnamed
Are born of man's degrading lust.
The wildest beast man ever tamed,
Or ever yet has come to know—
The vilest beast would feel disgust
Could it but know how low, how low

God's image sinks in muck and slime,
In crimes so deeper than all crime,
In slime that hath not yet a name,
And yet man knows no whit of shame!

XII

"Poor, weak, mad man, so halt, so blind!
Poor, weak, mad man that must carouse
And prostitute what he should house
And husband for his coming kind!
Behold the dumb beasts at glad morn,
Clean beasts that hold them well in hand!
How nobler thus to lord the land,
How nobler thus to love your race,
To house its health and strength and grace,
Than rob the races yet unborn
And build new Babylons to scorn!

XIII

"I say that each man has a right,
The right the beast has to be born
Full-flowered, beauteous, free and fair
As wide-winged bird that rides the air;
Not as a babe that cries all night,
Cries, cries in darkness for such Light
As man should give it at its birth.
I say that poor babe has a right,
The right, at least, of each wild beast—
Aye, red babe, black, white, west or east,
To rise at birth and lord the earth,
Strong-limbed, long-limbed, robust and free
As supple beast or towering tree.

XIV

"God's pity for the breasts that bear
A little babe, then banish it
To stranger hands, to alien care,
To live or die as chance sees fit.
Poor, helpless hands, reached anywhere,
As God gave them to reach and reach,
With only helplessness in each!
Poor little hands, pushed here, pushed there,
And all night long for mother's breast:
Poor, restless hands that will not rest
And gather strength to reach out strong
To mother in the rosy morn!
Nay, nay, they gather scorn for scorn
And hate for hate the lorn night long—
Poor, dying babe! to reach about
In blackness, as a thing cast out!

XV

"God's pity for the thing of lust
Who bears a frail babe to be thrust
Forth from her arms to alien thrall,
As shutting out the light of day,
As shutting off God's very breath!
But thrice God's pity, let us pray,
For her who bears no babe at all,
But, grinning, leads the dance of death.
That sexless, steel-braced breast of bone
Is like to some assassin cell,
A whited sepulchre of stone,
A graveyard at the gates of hell,
A mart where motherhood is sold,
A house of murders manifold!"

CANTO II

I

He heard; he could but bow his head
In silence, penitence, and shame,
Confess the truth of all she said
Of crimes committed in Love's name,
Nor beg the sacred seal of red
To marriage bond and marriage bed.

II

And that was all, aye, that was all
For days, for days that seemed as years.
He still must woo, put by her fears,
Make her his friend, let what befall;
Bide her sweet will and, loving, bide
Meek dalliance with his maiden bride.

III

One night in May, such soulful night
Of cherry blossoms, birds, such birds
As burst with song, that sing outright
Because so glad they cannot keep
Their song, but sing out in their sleep!
Such noisy night, a cricket's night,
A night of Katydids, of dogs
That bayed and bayed the vast full moon
In chorus with glad, tuneful frogs—
With May's head in the lap of June.
How hot, how sultry hot the room!
Their garden tree in perfect bloom
Gave out fair Nippon's full perfume—

The night grew warm and very warm,
And warm her warm, full-bosomed form!

IV

How vital, virile, strong with life,
The world without, the maiden wife!
How wondrous fair the world, how fair
The maid meshed in her mighty hair!
The man uprose, caught close a skin,
A lion's skin, threw this about
His great, Herculean, pent-up form,
Thrust feet into his slippered shoes,
Then, with a lion's force and frown
He strode the wide room up and down,
The skin's claws flapping at his thews.
He turned, he caught her suddenly
And instant wrapped her close within;
Then down the stairs and back and out
Beneath the blossomed Nippon tree—
Against the tree he pressed her form,
He was so warm, so very warm—
He held her close as close could be
Against the blossomed cherry tree.

V

He held with all his might and main—
Held her so hard he shook the tree,
Because he trembled mightily
And shook in his hard, happy pain—
Because he quivered as a pine
When tropic storm sweeps up the line,
As when some swift horse, harnessed low,
Frets hard and bites the bit to go.

She laughed such low, sweet laugh, and said,
The while she raised her pretty head,
"Please, please, be gentle good to me,
And please don't hurt the cherry tree."

VI

The warm land lay as in a swoon,
Full length, the happy lap of June—
A fair bride fainting with delight
And fond forgetfulness with night.
How warm the world was and how wise
The world is in its love of life,
Its hate of harshness, hate of strife,
Its love of Eden, peace that lies
In love-set, leaf-sown Paradise!

VII

How generous, how good is night
To give its length to man's delight—
To give its strength from dusk till morn
To push the planted yellow corn!
How warm this garden was, how warm
With life, with love in any form!
Two lowly crickets, clad in black,
Came shyly forth, shrank sudden back—
Then chirped in chorus, side by side;
And oh, their narrow world was wide
As oceans, light their hearts as air,
And oh, their little world was fair,
And oh, their little world was warm
Because each had a lover there,
Because they loved and didn't care.

VIII

How languid all things with delight,
With sensuous longings, sweet desire
That burned as with immortal fire,
Immortal love that burns to live
And, lives to burn, to take, to give,
Create, bring forth, and loving share
With God the fruitage, flesh or flower—
Just loving, loving, bud or bower,
Or bee or birdling, small or great,
Just loving, loving to create,
With just one caution, just one care—
That all creation shall be fair.

IX

The very garden wall was warm
With gorgeous sunshine gone away;
Each vine, with eager, reaching arm,
Clung amorous, tiptoed to kiss,
With eager lips, the ardent clay
That held her to its breast of bliss.

X

Blown cherry blossoms basking lay,
A perfect pathway of perfume;
The tiger lily scarce had room
For roses bending in a storm
Of laden sweetness more than sweet.
The moon leaned o'er the garden wall,
Then, smiling, tiptoed up her way,
The while she let one full beam fall,
Love-laden in the sensuous heat,

So sweet, so warm, so still withal,
Love heard pink cherry blossoms fall.

XI

A Katydid laid his green thigh
Against another leaf-green form
And so began to sing and sigh,
As if it were his time to die
From stress and strain of passion's storm—
He, too, was warm and very warm.

XII

A tasseled hammock, silken red,
Swung, hung hard by, and foot and head,
A blossom-laden cherry tree.
This famed tree of the Japanese,
Whatever other trees may be,
Is held most sacred of all trees:
Not quite because of its perfume,
Not all because of rich pink bloom,
But much because its blossomed boughs
Not only list to lover's vows,
But true to lovers, ever true,
Refuse to let one moonbeam through.

XIII

Here, close beneath this Nippon tree,
The sweetest tree this side Cathay,
The lover's tree of mystery,
Where not a thread of moonlight lay,
While waves of moonlight laughed and played
At hide and seek the other way,.

He threw her, full length, from his arm;
Full length, then raised her drooping head,
Threw back the skin and, blushing red,
He sought to say—He nothing said!
He nothing did but blush and blush
And feel his hot blood rush and rush—
The very hammock's fringe was warm
The while he leaned low from his place
And felt her warm breath in his face.

XIV

Then, all abashed, he trembled so
He clutched the hammock hard and fast,
He held so hard it came, at last,
To swing, to swing fast to and fro.
Such awkwardness! He clutched, let go,
Then clutched so hard he shook each tree
Till perfumed silence came to see —
Till fragrance fell upon her hair,
Such hair, a storm of pink and snow.
How fair, how fair, how sensuous fair,
Half hidden in a pink snow-storm;
And yet how warm, how more than warm!

XV

How shamed he was! His great heart beat
As beats some signal for retreat.
This stupid, bravest of brave men,
Confused, dismayed, hung down his head,
Then turned and helplessly had fled,
Had she not reached a timid hand
And, half as pleading, half command
And half-way laughing, shyly said,

From out her snood of snow and rain,
"Please shake the Nippon trees again!"

XVI

He shook the trees; a fragrant shower
On laughing face and loosened hair—
A flash of perfume and of flower—
Oh, she was fair and very fair!
Then with a sudden strength he plucked
His red-ripe cherry from the tree,
Wound 'round the skin and loosely tucked
The folds about her modestly,
Then on and up with giant stride
He bore his blushing maiden bride,
So cherry ripe, so cherry red,
And laid her in her bridal bed—
Laid perfumed bride, laid flesh and flower,
Half drowning from the fragrant shower.
What snows strewn in her ample hair,
What low, light laughter everywhere,
Or cherry tree, or step or stair!
Just low, soft laughter, cherry bloom,
Just love and love's unnamed perfume.

XVII

He tossed the lion's skin aside,
With folded arms leaned o'er his bride,
Turned low the light, then stood full length,
Then strode in all his supple strength
The room a time, tossed back his hair,
Then to his bride, swift bent to her,
And kneeled, as lowliest worshiper.

XVIII

And then he threw him by her side,
His long, strong limbs thrown out full length,
His two fists full of housed-up strength.
What pride, what manly, kingly pride
That he had conquered, bravely slain
His baser self, was self again!

XIX

He held a hand exceeding small,
He breathed her perfume, threw her hair
Across her breast with such sweet care
He scarce did touch her form at all.
Again he rose, strode to and fro,
Came back and turned the light quite low.

XX

He bowed his face close to her feet;
Now he would rise, then would not rise;
He bent, blushed to his very eyes,
Then sudden pushed aside the sheet
And kissed her pink and pearly toes.
Their perfume was the perfect rose
When perfect summer, passion, heat,
Points both hands of the clock straight up,
As when we lift and drain the cup,
As when we lift two hands and pray
When we have lived our bravest day,
The horologue of life may stop
With both hands pointing to the top.

XXI

Then suddenly, in strength and pride,
Full length he threw him at her side
And caught again her timid hand,
A bird that had escaped his snare.
He caught it hard, he held it there,
He begged her pardon, begged and prayed
She would forgive him, then he laid
His face to her face and the land
Was like a fairy land. They lay
As children well outworn at play.

XXII

As children bounding from their bed,
So rested, radiant, satisfied
With self and selfishness denied,
Life seemed some merry roundelay.
They laughed with early morn, they led,
So full of soul, of strength were they,
The laughing dance of love all day.

XXIII

All day! A month of days, and each
A song, a sermon, but to teach,
A holy book to teach the truth
Of endless, laughing, joyous youth.
He stood so tall, he stood so strong—
As one who holds the keys yet keeps
His treasure housed in shining heaps,
Until all life was as a song.

XXIV

At last, one warmest morning, she
Would scarce let go, said o'er and o'er,
Held close his hand, held hard the door,
"Good-by! Come early back to me!"
And then, close up beside, as one
Might eager seek some stout oak tree
When storm is sudden threatened, she
Put up her pretty, pouting mouth,
Half closed her laughing, saucy eyes—
Such lips, such roses from the south,
The warm, south side of Paradise!—

XXV

"Good-by! Come early back to me!"
Why, he heard nothing else all day,
Saw nothing else, knew naught but this,
Their fond, fond, first full-flowered kiss,
Wherein she led the rosy way,
As is her right, as it should be.
He looked his watch hard in its face
A hundred times, he blushed, he smiled,
Did leave his friends and lightly pace
The street, half laughing, as a child.
A million kisses! He'd had one—
Scant one, his joy had just begun!

XXVI

Come early? He was at the gate
And through the door ere yet the day
Had kneeled down in the west to pray
Its vesper prayer, all brimming o'er

And blushing that he could not wait
To kiss her just once more, once more;
Take breath then kiss her o'er and o'er.

XXVII

By some sweet chance he found her there,
Close fenced against the winding stair,
With no escape, behind, before.
She put her lips up as to plead
She might be spared a little space;
But there was mischief in her face,
A world of frolic and of fun,
And he could run as he could read,
Aye, he could read as he could run.
And then she pushed her full lips out:
"You are so strong, you hold so fast!
You know I tried to guard the door."
And then she frowned, began to pout
And sighed, "Dear, dear, 'tis not well done!"
And then he caught her close, and then
He kissed her once, twice, thrice again.

XXVIII

Then days and many days of this—
Ah! man, make merry and carouse
Upon your way, within your house,
Hold right there in your manly hand,
Your happy maid who waits your kiss;
Carouse on kisses and carouse
In soul, the livelong, thronging day
When duty tears you well away,
To know what waits you at the gate,
And waiting loves and loves to wait.

XXIX

And how to kiss? A thousand ways,
And each way new and each way true,
And each way true and each way new
Each day for thrice ten thousand days.

XXX

How loyal he who loves, how grand!
He does not tell her overmuch,
He does not sigh or seek to touch
Her garments' hem or lily hand;
She is his soul, his life, his light,
His saint by day, his shrine by night.

XXXI

True love leads home his maiden bride
Low-voiced and tender, soft and true;
He leans to her, to woo, to woo,
As if she still turned and denied—
No selfish touch, no sated kiss
To kill and dig the grave of bliss.

XXXII

True love will hold his maiden bride
As nobles hold inheritance;
He will not part with one small pence
Of her fair strength and stately pride,
But wait serenely at her side,
Supremely proud, full satisfied.

XXXIII

Why, what a glorious thing to view!
Each morn a maiden at your side,
The one fair woman, maid and bride,
With all her sweetness waiting you!
How wise the miser, more than wise,
Who knows to count and keep such prize!

XXXIV

How glad the coming home of him
Who knows a maiden waits and waits,
All pulsing, still, within his gates,
To kiss his goblet's golden brim;
How joyous still to woo and woo,
To read the old new story through!

XXXV

Ah me, behold what heritage!
What light by which to walk, to live
This age when lights resplendent burn,
This glorious, shining, new-born age,
When love can bravely give and give
And get thrice tenfold in return,
If man will only love and learn!

XXXVI

And now soft colors through the house
Began to surely bud and bloom;
The wise, the fair, far-seeing spouse

Began to deck the bridal room;
Began to build, as builds a bird,
When first footfalls of spring are heard.

XXXVII

Some warm-toned colors on the wall,
Then gorgeous, grass-like carpetings
Strown, sown with lily, pink and all
That nature in sweet springtime brings;
Then curtains from the Orient,
The silken couch, soft as a kiss,
The music born of love and blent
But rarely with such loves as this;
Mute music, where not hand of man
Or foot of man is seen or heard,
Such soft, sweet sound as only can
In happy blossom time be heard—
Be heard from happy, nested bird.

XXXVIII

And now full twelve o'clock, the noon
Of faithful, trustful, wedded love,
The two hands pointing straight above,
This vast midnight, this argent June!
Their noon was midnight and the moon
Came through the silken sheen and laid
A sword of silver at her side.
And peace, sweet, perfect peace was hers,
As when nor bird nor blossom stirs,
And she was now no more afraid;
The moon surrendered to the maid,
Drew back and softly turned aside,
As bridesmaid turning from the bride.

XXXIX

All voiceless, noiseless, tenderly
He pressed beside her, took her hand—
He took her from the leaning moon,
And far beyond the amber sea,
They sailed the seas of afternoon—
The far, still seas, so grandly grand,
Until they came to babyland.
And there Creation was and there
Were giants in the land, once more,
Long-lived and valiant as of yore,
Yet gentle, patient as His Prayer.

SIT LUX

* Let me explain that this was penned amid the scenes described, in order to get the color, action, and atmosphere, and that from time to time fragments were in print during my wanderings; so you may find bits in the book not entirely new. But as these were photographs, so far as I could make them, they must remain unchanged.

My aspiration is and ever has been, in my dim and uncertain way, to be a sort of Columbus—or a Cortez. "And if I perish, I perish."

But I need room. I need not only the latitude but even the longitude of all known oceans and of all glorious nature to sail these uncharted buccaneer seas. For the tribute of song and story must be not only worthy them but of sympathetic interest and sincere concern to you, my ardent reader.

Besides and above all, despising the hazard of new work and ways, I aspire to picture the matchless, magnificent, and terrible splendors of our gold-strown and flame-fed Arctic Empire. At the same time, please let me pioneer a little further and try to set the banner of Song on the sunlit Islands, along the sea bank of everlasting Summer, and over against the cloud-born battlements of our mighty American Ocean.

The body of this was published in Boston not long ago, under the name of "Light," with the above note; the body, mind you,

not the soul of it. Launched without its soul and shorn of its most significant lines it was as a ship without keel or captain and never once came fairly into port. Some passing ships saluted, some trumpet calls were heard across the waters. But it was, in the main as "a painted ship upon a painted ocean," and to all appearances as purposeless.

But I have seen too much sin and sorrow, born of ignorance, to dream idle dreams. My work is serious work and should serve definite purposes.

The one simple and sublime law of nature, God, it seems to me is creation, and the one highest, holiest law, the flower of the garden, the best last of the uncompleted six days, the creation, the completion of perfect man.

A Luther Burbank has arisen in the land to perfect, create, the fruit and the flowers; the Arab's love of beauty and action created the perfect stallion; the German's love of content and animal comfort has given us the perfect bull in his strength and glory; the ruddy, healthy, happy Briton has, in his determination to perpetuate comfort and content, created the perfect ram. But what race or nation or man or woman has risen up and cried aloud so as to be heard of all the world, "Come, let us now make man?"

But, you ask, was it necessary to leave the sunny sea-bank, with poppies under foot and the wild oats waving in the wind, and fare forth into the ices of Alaska? I only know that we must have winter and frost and freezing cold where most things perish before spring. After the ices the Orient, then the Islands of eternal Summer, then the restful, trustful, holy human love; then marriage and, maybe, the perfect man.

WITH LOVE TO YOU AND YOURS

WITH LOVE TO YOU AND YOURS

"And God said, Let there be light."

Rise up! How brief this little day?
We can but kindle some dim light
Here in the darkened, wooded way
Before the gathering of night.
Come, let us kindle it. The dawn
Shall find us tenting farther on.
Come, let us kindle ere we go—
We know not where; but this we know,
Night cometh on, and man needs light.
Come! camp-fire embers, ere we grope
Yon gray archway of night.

Life is so brief, so very brief,
So rounded in, we scarce can see
The fruitage grown amid the leaf
And foliage of a single tree
In all God's garden; yet we know
That goodly fruits must grow and grow
Beyond our vision. We but stand
In some deep hollow of God's hand,
Hear some sweet bird its little day,
See cloud and sun a season pass,
And then, sweet friend, away!

Clouds pass, they come again; and we,
Are we, then, less than these to God?
Oh, for the stout faith of a tree
That drops its small seeds to the sod,
Safe in the hollow of God's hand,
And knows that perish from the land

It shall not! Yea, this much we know,
That each, as best it can, shall grow
As God has fashioned, fair or plain,
To do its best, or cloud or sun,
Or in His still, small rain.

Oh, good to see is faith in God!
But better far is faith in good:
The one seems but a sign, a nod,
The one seems God's own flesh and blood.
How many names of God are sung!
But good is good in every tongue.
And this the light, the Holy Light
That leads thro' night and night and night;
Thro' nights named Death, that lie between
The days named Life, the ladder round
Unto the Infinite Unseen.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth; the earth was without form and void and darkness lay upon the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

PART FIRST

I

What is there in a dear dove's eyes,
Or voice of mated melodies,
That tells us ever of blue skies
And cease of deluge on Love's seas?
The dove looked down on Jordan's tide
Well pleased with Christ the Crucified;
The dove was hewed in Karnak stone
Before fair Jordan's banks were known.
The dove has such a patient look,
I read rest in her pretty eyes
As in the Holy Book.

I think if I should love some day—
And may I die when dear Love dies—
I'd sail brave San Francisco's Bay
And seek to see some sea-dove's eyes:
To see her in her air-built nest,
Her wide, warm, restful wings at rest;
To see her rounded neck reach out,
Her eyes lean lovingly about;
And seeing this as love can see,
I then should know, and surely know,
That love sailed on with me.

II

See once this boundless bay and live,
See once this beauteous bay and love,
See once this warm, bright bay and give
God thanks for olive branch and dove.
Then plunge headlong yon sapphire sea

And sail and sail the world with me. . . .
Some isles, drowned in the drowning sun,
Ten thousand sea-doves voiced as one;
Lo! love's wings furled and wings unfurled;
Who sees not this warm, half-world sea,
Sees not, knows not the world.

How knocks he at the Golden Gate,
This lord of waters, strong and bold,
And fearful-voiced and fierce as fate,
And hoar and old, as Time is old;
Yet young as when God's finger lay
Against Night's forehead that first day,
And drove vast Darkness forth, and rent
The waters from the firmament.
Hear how he knocks and raves and loves!
He woos us through the Golden Gate
With all his soft sea-doves.

Now on and on, up, down, and on,
The sea is oily grooves; the air
Is as your bride's sweet breath at dawn
When all your ardent youth is there.
And oh, the rest! and oh, the room!
And oh, the sensuous sea perfume!
Yon new moon peering as we passed
Has scarce escaped our topmost mast.
A porpoise, wheeling restlessly,
Quick draws a bright, black, dripping blade,
Then sheathes it in the sea.

* * * * * *

Vast, half-world, wondrous sea of ours!
Dread, unknown deep of all sea deeps!
What fragrance from thy strange sea-flowers

Deep-gardened where God's silence keeps!
Thy song is silence, and thy face
Is God's face in His holy place.
Thy billows swing sweet censer foam,
Where stars hang His cathedral's dome.
Such blue above, below such blue!
These burly winds so tall, they can
Scarce walk between the two.

Such room of sea! Such room of sky!
Such room to draw a soul-full breath!
Such room to live! Such room to die!
Such room to roam in after death!
White room, with sapphire room set 'round,
And still beyond His room profound;
Such room-bound boundlessness o'erhead
As never has been writ or said
Or seen, save by the favored few,
Where kings of thought play chess with stars
Across their board of blue.

* * * * * *

III

The proud ship wrapped her in the red
That hung from heaven, then the gray,
The soft dove-gray that shrouds the dead
And prostrate form of perfumed day:
Some noisy, pigmy creatures kept
The deck a spell, then, leaning, crept
Apart in silence and distrust,
Then down below in deep disgust.
An albatross,—a shadow cross
Hung at the head of buried day,—
At foot the albatross.

Then came a warm, soft, sultry breath—
A weary wind that wanted rest;
A breath as from some house of death
With flowers heaped; as from the breast
Of such sweet princess as had slept
Some thousand years embalmed, and kept,
In fearful Karnak's tomb-hewn hill,
Her perfume and spiced sweetness still,—
Such breath as bees droop down to meet,
And creep along lest it may melt
Their honey-laden feet.

The captain's trumpet smote the air!
Swift men, like spiders up a thread,
Swept suddenly. Then masts were bare
As when tall poplars' leaves are shed,
And ropes were clamped and stays were clewed.
'T was as when wrestlers, iron-thewed,
Gird tight their loins, take full breath,
And set firm face, as fronting death.
Three small brown birds, or gray, so small,
So ghostly still and swift they passed,
They scarce seemed birds at all.

Then quick, keen saber-cuts, like ice;
Then sudden hail, like battle-shot,
Then two last men crept down like mice,
And man, poor, pigmy man, was not.
The great ship shivered, as with cold—
An instant staggered back, then bold
As Theodosia, to her waist
In waters, stood erect and faced
Black thunder; and she kept her way

And laughed red lightning from her face
As on some gala day.

The black sea-horses rode in row;
Their white manes tossing to the night
But made the blackness blacker grow
From flashing, phosphorescent light.
And how like hurdle steeds they leapt!
The low moon burst; the black troop swept
Right through her hollow, on and on.
A wave-wet simitar was drawn,
Flashed twice, flashed thrice triumphantly,
But still the steeds dashed on, dashed on,
And drowned her in the sea.

What headlong winds that lost their way
At sea, and wailed out for the shore!
How shook the orient doors of day
With all this mad, tumultuous roar!
Black clouds, shot through with stars of red;
Strange stars, storm-born and fire-fed;
Lost stars that came, and went, and came;
Such stars as never yet had name.
The far sea-lions on their isles
Upheaved their huge heads terrified,
And moaned a thousand miles.

What fearful battle-field! What space
For light and darkness, flame and flood!
Lo! Light and Darkness, face to face,
In battle harness battling stood!
And how the surged sea burst upon

The granite gates of Oregon!*
It tore, it tossed the seething spume,
And wailed for room! and room! and room!
It shook the crag-built eaglets' nest
Until they screamed from out their clouds,
Then rocked them back to rest.

How fiercely reckless raged the war!
Then suddenly no ghost of light,
Or even glint of storm-born star.
Just night, and black, torn bits of night;
Just night, and midnight's middle noon,
With all mad elements in tune;
Just night, and that continuous roar
Of wind, wind, night, and nothing more.
Then all the hollows of the main
Sank down so deep, it almost seemed
The seas were hewn in twain.

How deep the hollows of this deep!
How high, how trembling high the crest!
Ten thousand miles of surge and sweep
And length and breadth of billow's breast!
Up! up, as if against the skies!
Down! down, as if no more to rise!
The creaking wallow in the trough,
As if the world was breaking off.
The pigmies in their trough down there!
Deep in their trough they tried to pray—
To hide from God in prayer.

* There is a small granite island, or great rock standing on pillars, eight miles off Cape Blanco. Fishermen may row their boats between these columns and they call the rock The Gates.

Then boomed Alaska's great, first gun
In battling ice and rattling hail;
Then Indus came, four winds in one!
Then came Japan in counter mail
Of mad cross winds; and Waterloo
Was but as some babe's tale unto.
The typhoon spun his toy in play
And whistled as a glad boy may
To see his top spin at his feet:
The captain on his bridge in ice,
His sailors mailed in sleet.

What unchained, unnamed, noises, space!
What shoreless, boundless, rounded reach
Of room was here! Fit field, fit place
For three fierce emperors, where each
Came armed with elements that make
Or unmake seas and lands, that shake
The heavens' roof, that freeze or burn
The seas as they may please to turn.
And such black silence! Not a sound
Save whistling of that mad, glad boy
To see his top spin round.

Then swift, like some sulked Ajax, burst
Thewed Thunder from his battle-tent;
As if in pent-up, vengeful thirst
For blood, the elements of Earth were rent,
And sheeted crimson lay a wedge
Of blood below black Thunder's edge.
A pause. The typhoon turned, upwheeled,
And wrestled Death till heaven reeled.
Then Lightning reached a fiery rod,
And on Death's fearful forehead wrote
The autograph of God.

IV

God's name and face—what need of more?
Morn came: calm came; and holy light,
And warm, sweet weather, leaning o'er,
Laid perfumes on the tomb of night.
The three wee birds came dimly back
And housed about the mast in black,
And all the tranquil sense of morn
Seemed as Dakota's fields of corn,
Save that some great soul-breaking sigh
Now sank the proud ship out of sight
Now sent her to the sky.

V

One strong, strange man had kept the deck—
One silent, seeing man, who knew
The pulse of Nature, and could reck
Her deepest heart-beats through and through.
He knew the night, he loved the night.
When elements went forth to fight
His soul went with them without fear
To hear God's voice, so few will hear.
The swine had plunged them in the sea,
The swine down there, but up on deck
The captain, God and he.

VI

And oh, such sea-shell tints of light
High o'er those wide sea-doors of dawn!
Sail, sail the world for that one sight,
Then satisfied, let time begone.

The ship rose up to meet that light,
Bright candles, tipped like tasseled corn,
The holy virgin, maiden morn,
Arrayed in woven gold and white.
Put by the harp—hush minstrelsy;
Nor bard or bird has yet been heard
To sing this scene, this sea.

VII

Such light! such liquid, molten light!
Such mantling, healthful, heartful morn!
Such morning born of such mad night!
Such night as never had been born!
The man caught in his breath, his face
Was lifted up to light and space;
His hand dashed o'er his brow, as when
Deep thoughts submerge the souls of men;
And then he bowed, bowed mute, appalled
At memory of scenes, such scenes
As this swift morn recalled.

He sought the ship's prow, as men seek
The utmost limit for their feet,
To lean, look forth, to list nor speak,
Nor turn aside, nor yet retreat
One inch from this far vantage-ground,
Till he had pierced the dread profound
And proved it false. And yet he knew
Deep in his earth that all was true;
So like it was to that first dawn
When God had said, "Let there be light,"
And thus he spake right on:

"My soul was born ere light was born,
When blackness was, as this black night.
And then that morn, as this sweet morn!
That sudden light, as this swift light!
I had forgotten. Now, I know
The travail of the world, the low,
Dull creatures in the sea of slime
That time committed unto time,
As great men plant oaks patiently,
Then turn in silence unto dust
And wait the coming tree.

"That long, lorn blackness, seams of flame,
Volcanoes bursting from the slime,
Huge, shapeless monsters without name
Slow shaping in the loom of time;
Slow weaving as a weaver weaves;
So like as when some good man leaves
His acorns to the centuries
And waits the stout ancestral trees.
But ah, so piteous, memory
Reels back, as sickened, from that scene—
It breaks the heart of me!

"Volcanoes crying out for light!
The very slime found tongues of fire!*
Huge monsters climbing in their might
O'er submerged monsters in the mire
That heaved their slimy mouths, and cried

* I saw this when with Capt. Eads at the mouth of our great river. The débris of more than a dozen States pouring into the warm waters of the Mexican seas creates fermentation which finds expression in volcanoes that spring flaming up out of the sea almost nightly. I know nothing so terrible as certain, or rather, uncertain nights in the Mississippi delta.

And cried for light, and crying, died.
How all that wailing through the air
But seems as some unbroken prayer.
One ceaseless prayer that long lorn night
The world lay in the loom of time
And waited so for light!

"And I, amid those monsters there,
A grade above, or still below?
Nay, Time has never time to care;
And I can scarcely dare to know.
I but remember that one prayer;
Ten thousand wide mouths in the air,
Ten thousand monsters in their might,
All eyeless, looking up for light.
We prayed, we prayed as never man,
By sea or land, by deed or word,
Has prayed since light began.

"Great sea-cows laid their fins upon
Low-floating isles, as good priests lay
Two holy hands, at early dawn,
Upon the altar cloth to pray.
Aye, ever so, with lifted head,
Poor, slime-born creatures and slime-bred,
We prayed. Our sealed-up eyes of night
All lifting, lifting up for light.
And I have paused to wonder, when
This world will pray as we then prayed,
What God may not give men!

"Hist! Once I saw,—What was I then?
Ah, dim and devious the light
Comes back, but I was not of men.
And it is only such black night

As this, that was of war and strife
Of elements, can wake that life,
That life in death, that black and cold
And blind and loveless life of old.
But hear! I saw—heed this and learn
How old, how holy old is Love,
However Time may turn:

"I saw, I saw, or somehow felt,
A sea-cow mother nurse her young.
I saw, and with thanksgiving knelt,
To see her head, low, loving, hung
Above her nursling. Then the light,
The lovelight from those eyes of night!
I say to you 't was lovelight then
That first lit up the eyes of men.
I say to you lovelight was born
Ere God laid hand to clay of man,
Or ever that first morn.

"What though a monster slew her so,
The while she bowed and nursed her young?
She leaned her head to take the blow,
And dying, still the closer clung—
And dying gave her life to save
The helpless life she erstwhile gave,
And so sank back below the slime,
A torn shred in the loom of time.
The one thing more I needs must say,
That monster slew her and her young;
But Love he could not slay."

PART SECOND

I

The man stood silent, peering past
His utmost verge of memory.
What lay beyond, beyond that vast
Bewildering darkness and dead sea
Of noisome vapors and dread night?
No light! not any sense of light
Beyond that life when Love was born
On that first, far, dim rim of morn:
No light beyond that beast that clung
In darkness by the light of love
And died to save her young.

And yet we know life must have been
Before that dark, dread life of pain;
Life germs, love germs of gentle men,
So small, so still; as still, small rain.
But whence this life, this living soul,
This germ that grows a godlike whole?
I can but think of that sixth day
When God first set His hand to clay,
And did in His own image plan
A perfect form, a manly form,
A comely, godlike man.

II

Did soul germs grow down in the deeps,
The while God's Spirit moved upon
The waters? High-set Lima keeps
A rose-path, like a ray of dawn;
And simple, pious peons say

Sweet Santa Rosa passed that way;
And so, because of her fair fame
And saintly face, these roses came.
Shall we not say, ere that first morn,
Where God moved, garmented in mists,
Some sweet soul germs were born?

III

The strange, strong man still kept the prow;
He saw, still saw before light was,
The dawn of love, the huge sea-cow,
The living slime, love's deathless laws.
He knew love lived, lived ere a blade
Of grass, or ever light was made;
And love was in him, of him, as
The light was on the sea of glass.
It made his heart great, and he grew
To look on God all unabashed;
To look lost eons through.

IV

Illuming love! what talisman!
That Word which makes the world go 'round!
That Word which bore worlds in its plan!
That Word which was the Word profound!
That Word which was the great First Cause,
Before light was, before sight was!
I would not barter love for gold
Enough to fill a tall ship's hold;
Nay, not for great Victoria's worth—
So great the sun sets not upon
In all his round of earth.

I would not barter love for all
The silver spilling from the moon;
I would not barter love at all
Though you should coin each afternoon
Of gold for centuries to be,
And count the coin all down as free
As conqueror fresh home from wars,—
Coin sunset bars, coin heaven-born stars,
Coin all below, coin all above,
Count all down at my feet, yet I—
I would not barter love.

V

The lone man started, stood as when
A strong man hears, yet does not hear.
He raised his hand, let fall, and then
Quick arched his hand above his ear
And leaned a little; yet no sound
Broke through the vast, serene profound.
Man's soul first knew some telephone
In sense and language all its own.
The tall man heard, yet did not hear;
He saw, and yet he did not see
A fair face near and dear.

For there, half hiding, crouching there
Against the capstan, coils on coils
Of rope, some snow still in her hair,
Like Time, too eager for his spoils,
Was such fair face raised to his face
As only dream of dreams give place;
Such shyness, boldness, sea-shell tint,
Such book as only God may print,

Such tender, timid, holy look
Of startled love and trust and hope,—
A gold-bound story-book.

And while the great ship rose and fell,
Or rocked or rounded with the sea,
He saw,—a little thing to tell,
An idle, silly thing, maybe,—
Where her right arms was bent to clasp
Her robe's fold in some closer clasp,
A little isle of melting snow
That round about and to and fro
And up and down kept eddying.
It told so much, that idle isle,
Yet such a little thing.

It told she, too, was of a race
Born ere the baby stars were born;
She, too, familiar with God's face,
Knew folly but to shun and scorn;
She, too, all night had sat to read
By heaven's light, to hear, to heed
The awful voice of God, to grow
In thought, to see, to feel, to know
The harmony of elements
That tear and toss the sea of seas
To foam-built battle-tents.

He saw that drifting isle of snow,
As some lorn miner sees bright gold
Seamed deep in quartz, and joys to know
That here lies hidden wealth untold.
And now his head was lifted strong,
As glad men lift the head in song.
He knew she, too, had spent the night

As he, in all that wild delight
Of tuneful elements; she, too,
He knew, was of that olden time
Ere oldest stars were new.

VI

Her soul's ancestral book bore date
Beyond the peopling of the moon,
Beyond the day when Saturn sate
In royal cincture, and the boon
Of light and life bestowed on stars
And satellites; ere martial Mars
Waxed red with battle rage and shook
The porch of heaven with a look;
Ere polar ice-shafts propt gaunt earth,
And slime was but the womb of time,
That knew not yet of birth.

VII

To be what thou wouldst truly be,
Be bravely, truly, what thou art.
The acorn houses the huge tree,
And patient, silent bears its part,
And bides the miracle of time.
For miracle, and more sublime
It is than all that has been writ,
To see the great oak grow from it.
But thus the soul grows, grows the heart,—
To be what thou wouldst truly be,
Be truly what thou art.

To be what thou wouldst truly be,
Be true. God's finger sets each seed,

Or when or where we may not see;
But God shall nourish to its need
Each one, if but it dares be true;
To do what it is set to do.
Thy proud soul's heraldry? 'T is writ
In every gentle action; it
Can never be contested. Time
Dates thy brave soul's ancestral book
From thy first deed sublime.

VIII

Wouldst learn to know one little flower,
Its perfume, perfect form and hue?
Yea, wouldst thou have one perfect hour
Of all the years that come to you?
Then grow as God hath planted, grow
A lordly oak or daisy low,
As He hath set His garden; be
Just what thou art, or grass or tree.
Thy treasures up in heaven laid
Await thy sure ascending soul,
Life after life,—be not afraid!

IX

Wouldst know the secrets of the soil?
Wouldst have Earth bare her breast to you?
Wouldst know the sweet rest of hard toil?
Be true, be true, be ever true!
Ah me, these self-made cuts of wrong
That hew men down! Behold the strong
And comely Adam bound with lies
And banished from his paradise!
The serpent on his belly still

Eats dirt through all his piteous days,
Do penance as he will.

Poor, heel-bruised, prostrate, tortuous snake!
What soul crawls here upon the ground?
God willed this soul at birth to take
The round of beauteous things, the round
Of earth, the round of boundless skies.
It lied, and lo! how low it lies!
What quick, sleek tongue to lie with here!
Wast thou a broker but last year?
Wast known to fame, wast rich and proud?
Didst live a lie that thou mightst die
With pockets in thy shroud?

X

Be still, be pitiful! that soul
May yet be rich in peace as thine.
Yea, as the shining ages roll
That rich man's soul may rise and shine
Beyond Orion; yet may reel
The Pleiades with belts of steel
That compass commerce in their reach;
May learn and learn, and learning teach,
The while his soul grows grandly old,
How nobler far to share a crust
Than hoard car-loads of gold!

XI

Oh, but to know; to surely know
How strangely beautiful is light!
How just one gleam of light will glow
And grow more beautifully bright

Than all the gold that ever lay
Below the wide-arched Milky Way!
"Let there be light!" and lo! the burst
Of light in answer to the first
Command of high Jehovah's voice!
Let there be light for man to-night,
That all men may rejoice.

XII

The little isle of ice and snow
That in her gathered garment lay,
And dashed and drifted to and fro
Unhindered of her, went its way.
The while the warm winds of Japan
Were with them, and the silent man
Stood by her, saying, hearing naught,
Yet seeing, noting all; as one
Sees not, yet all day sees the sun.
He knew her silence, heeded well
Her dignity of idle hands
In this deep, tranquil spell.

XIII

The true soul surely knows its own,
Deep down in this man's heart he knew,
Somehow, somewhere along the zone
Of time, his soul should come unto
Its safe seaport, some pleasant land
Of rest where she should reach a hand.
He had not questioned God. His care
Was to be worthy, fit to share

The glory, peace, and perfect rest,
Come how or when or where it comes,
As God in time sees best.

Her face reached forward, not to him,
But forward, upward, as for light;
For light that lay a silver rim
Of sea-lit whiteness more than white.
The vast full morning poured and spilled
Its splendor down, and filled and filled
And overfilled the heaped-up sea
With silver molten suddenly.
The night lay trenched in her meshed hair;
The tint of sea-shells left the sea
To make her more than fair.

What massed, what matchless midnight hair!
Her wide, sweet, sultry, drooping mouth,
As droops some flower when the air
Blows odors from the ardent South—
That Sapphic, sensate, bended bow
Of deadly archery; as though
Love's legions fortressed there and sent
Red arrows from his bow fell bent.
Such apples! such sweet fruit concealed
Of perfect womanhood make more
Sweet pain than if revealed.

XIV

How good a thing it is to house
Thy full heart treasures to that day
When thou shalt take her, and carouse
Thenceforth with her for aye and aye;

How good a thing to give the store
That thus the thousand years or more,
Poor, hungered, holy worshiper,
You kept for her, and only her!
How well with all thy wealth to wait
Or year, or thousand thousand years,
Her coming at love's gate!

XV

The winds pressed warm from warm Japan
Upon her pulsing womanhood.
They fanned such fires in the man
His face shone glory where he stood.
In Persia's rose-fields, I have heard,
There sings a sad, sweet, one-winged bird;
Sings ever sad in lonely round
Until his one-winged mate is found;
And then, side laid to side, they rise
So swift, so strong, they even dare
The doorway of the skies.

XVI

How rich was he! how richer she!
Such treasures up in heaven laid,
Where moth and rust may never be,
Nor thieves break in, or make afraid.
Such treasures, where the tranquil soul
Walks space, nor limit nor control
Can know, but journeys on and on
Beyond the golden gates of dawn;
Beyond the outmost round of Mars;
Where God's foot rocks the cradle of
His new-born baby stars.

XVII

As one who comes upon a street,
Or sudden turn in pleasant path,
As one who suddenly may meet
Some scene, some sound, some sense that hath
A memory of olden days,
Of days that long have gone their ways,
She caught her breath, caught quick and fast
Her breath, as if her whole life passed
Before, and pendant to and fro
Swung in the air before her eyes;
And oh, her heart beat so!

How her heart beat! Three thousand years
Of weary, waiting womanhood,
Of folded hands, of falling tears,
Of lone soul-wending through dark wood;
But now at last to meet once more
Upon the bright, all-shining shore
Of earth, in life's resplendent dawn,
And he so fair to look upon!
Tall Phaon and the world aglow!
Tall Phaon, favored of the gods,
And oh, her heart beat so!

Her heart beat so, no word she spake;
She pressed her palms, she leaned her face,—
Her heart beat so, its beating brake
The cord that held her robe in place
About her wondrous, rounded throat,
And in the warm winds let it float
And fall upon her soft, round arm,

So warm it made the morning warm.
Then pink and pearl forsook her cheek,
And, "Phaon, I am Sappho, I—"
Nay, nay, she did not speak.

And was this Sappho, she who sang
When mournful Jeremiah wept?
When harps, where weeping willows hang,
Hung mute and all their music kept?
Such witchery of song as drew
The war-like world to hear her sing,
As moons draw mad seas following.
Aye, this was Sappho; Lesbos hill
Had all been hers, and Tempos vale,
And song sweet as to kill.

Her dark Greek eyes turned to the sea;
Lo, Phaon's ferry as of old!
He kept his boat's prow still, and he
Was stately, comely, strong, and bold
As when he ferried gods, and drew
Immortal youth from one who knew
His scorn of gold. The Lesbian shore
Lay yonder, and the rocky roar
Against the promontory told,
Told and retold her tale of love
That never can grow old.

Three thousand years! yet love was young
And fair as when Æolis knew
Her glory, and her great soul strung
The harp that still sweeps ages through.
Ionic dance or Doric war,

Or purpled dove or dulcet car,
Or unyoked dove or close-yoked dove,
What meant it all but love and love?
And at the naming of Love's name
She raised her eyes, and lo! her doves!
Just of old they came.

PART THIRD

I

And they sailed on; the sea-doves sailed,
And Love sailed with them. And there lay
Such peace as never had prevailed
On earth since dear Love's natal day.
Great black-backed whales blew bows in
clouds,
Wee sea-birds flitted through the shrouds.
A wide-winged, amber albatross
Blew by, and bore his shadow cross,
And seemed to hang it on the mast,
The while he followed far behind,
The great ship flew so fast.

She questioned her if Phaon knew,
If he could dream, or halfway guess
How she had tracked the ages through
And trained her soul to gentleness
Through many lives, through every part
To make her worthy his great heart.
Would Phaon turn and fly her still,
With that fierce, proud, imperious will,
And scorn her still, and still despise?
She shuddered, turned aside her face,
And lo, her sea-dove's eyes!

II

Then days of rest and restful nights;
And love kept tryst as true love will,
The prow their trysting-place. Delights
Of silence, simply sitting still,—

Of asking nothing, saying naught;
For all that they had ever sought
Sailed with them; words or deeds had been
Impertinence, a selfish sin.
And oh, to know how sweet a thing
Is silence on those restful seas
When Love's dove folds her wing!

The great sea slept. In vast repose
His pillowed head half-hidden lay,
Half-drowned in dread Alaskan snows
That stretch to where no man can say.
His huge arms tossed to left, to right,
Where black woods, banked like bits of night,
As sleeping giants toss their arms
At night about their fearful forms.
A slim canoe, a night-bird's call,
Some gray sea-doves, just these and Love,
And Love indeed was all!

III

Far, far away such cradled Isles
As Jason dreamed and Argos sought
Surge up from endless watery miles!
And thou, the pale high priest of thought,
The everlasting thronèd king
Of fair Samoa! Shall I bring
Sweet sandal-wood? Or shall I lay
Rich wreaths of California's bay
From sobbing maidens? Stevenson,
Sleep well. Thy work is done; well done!
So bravely, bravely done!

And Molokia's lord of love
And tenderness, and piteous tears
For stricken man! Go forth, O dove!
With olive branch, and still the fears
Of those he meekly died to save.
They shall not perish. From that grave
Shall grow such healing! such as He
Gave stricken men by Galilee.
Great ocean cradle, cradle, keep
These two, the chosen of thy heart,
Rocked in sweet, baby sleep.

IV

Fair land of flowers, land of flame,
Of sun-born seas, of sea-born clime,
Of clouds low shepherded and tame
As white pet sheep at shearing time,
Of great, white, generous high-born rain,
Of rainbows builded not in vain—
Of rainbows builded for the feet
Of love to pass dry-shod and fleet
From isle to isle, when smell of musk
'Mid twilight is, and one lone star
Sits in the brow of dusk.

Oh, dying, sad-voiced, sea-born maid!
And plundered, dying, still sing on.
Thy breast against the thorn is laid—
Sing on, sing on, sweet dying swan.
How pitiful! And so despoiled
By those you fed, for whom you toiled!
Aloha! Hail you, and farewell,
Far echo of some lost sea-shell!
Some song that lost its way at sea,

Some sea-lost notes of nature, lost,
That crying, came to me.

Dusk maid, adieu! One sea-shell less!
Sad sea-shell silenced and forgot.
O Rachel in the wilderness,
Wail on! Your children they are not.
And they who took them, they who laid
Hard hand, shall they not feel afraid?
Shall they who in the name of God
Robbed and enslaved, escape His rod?
Give me some after-world afar
From these hard men, for well I know
Hell must be where they are.

V

Lo! suddenly the lone ship burst
Upon an uncompleted world,
A world so dazzling white, man durst
Not face the flashing search-light hurled
From heaven's snow-built battlements
And high-heaved camp of cloud-wreathed tents.
And boom! boom! boom! from sea or shore
Came one long, deep, continuous roar,
As if God wrought; as if the days,
The first six pregnant mother morns,
Had not quite gone their way.

What word is fitting but the Word
Here in this vast world-fashioning?
What tongue here name the nameless Lord?
What hand lay hand on anything?
Come, let us coin new words of might
And massiveness to name this light,

This largeness, largeness everywhere!
White rivers hanging in the air,
Ice-tied through all eternity!
Nay, peace! It were profane to say:
We dare but hear and see.

Be silent! Hear the strokes resound!
'T is God's hand rounding down the earth
Take off thy shoes, 't is holy ground,—
Behold! a continent has birth!
The skies bow down, Madonna's blue
Enfolds the sea in sapphire. You
May lift, a little spell, your eyes
And feast them on the ice-propped skies,
And feast but for a little space:
Then let thy face fall grateful down
And let thy soul say grace.

VI

At anchor so, and all night through,
The two before God's temple kept.
He spake: "I know yon peak; I knew
A deep ice-cavern there. I slept
With hairy men, or monsters slew,
Or led down misty seas my crew
Of cruel savages and slaves,
And slew who dared the distant waves,
And once a strange, strong ship—and *she,*
I bore her to yon cave of ice,—
And Love companioned me.

VII

"Two scenes of all scenes from the first
Have come to me on this great sea:
The one when light from heaven burst,
The one when sweet Love came to me.
And of the two, or best or worst,
I ever hold this second first,
Bear with me. Yonder citadel
Of ice tells all my tongue can tell:
My thirst for love, my pain, my pride,
My soul's warm youth the while she lived,
Its old age when she died.

"I know not if she loved or no.
I only asked to serve and love;
To love and serve, and ever so
My love grew as grows light above,—
Grew from gray dawn to gold midday,
And swept the wide world in its sway.
The stars came down, so close they came,
I called them, named them with her name,
The kind moon came,—came once so near,
That in the hollow of her arm
I leaned my lifted spear.

"And yet, somehow, for all the stars,
And all the silver of the moon,
She looked from out her icy bars
As longing for some sultry noon;
As longing for some warmer kind,
Some far south sunland left behind.
Then I went down to sea. I sailed
Thro' seas where monstrous beasts prevailed,
Such slimy, shapeless, hungered things!

Red griffins, wide-winged, bat-like wings,
Black griffins, black or fire-fed,
That ate my fever-stricken men
Ere yet they were quite dead.

"I could not find her love for her,
Or land, or fit thing for her touch,
And I came back, sad worshiper,
And watched and longed and loved so much!
I watched huge monsters climb and pass
Reflected in great walls, like glass;
Dark, draggled, hairy, fearful forms
Upblown by ever-battling storms,
And streaming still with slime and spray;
So huge from out their sultry seas,
Like storm-torn islands they.

"Then even these she ceased to note,
She ceased at last to look on me,
But, baring to the sun her throat,
She looked and looked incessantly
Away against the south, away
Against the sun the livelong day.
At last I saw her watch the swan
Surge tow'rd the north, surge on and on.
I saw her smile, her first, faint smile;
Then burst a new-born thought, and I,
I nursed that all the while.

VIII

"I somehow dreamed, or guessed, or knew,
That somewhere in the dear earth's heart
Was warmth and tenderness and true
Delight, and all love's nobler part.

I tried to think, aye, thought and thought;
In all the strange fruits that I brought
For her delight I could but find
The sweetness deep within the rind.
All beasts, all birds, some better part
Of central being deepest housed;
And earth must have a heart.

"I watched the wide-winged birds that blew
Continually against the bleak
And ice-built north, and surely knew
The long, lorn croak, the reaching beak,
Led not to ruin evermore;
For they came back, came swooping o'er
Each spring, with clouds of younger ones,
So dense, they dimmed the summer suns.
And thus I knew somehow, somewhere,
Beyond earth's ice-built, star-tipt peaks
They found a softer air.

"And too, I heard strange stories, held
In memories of my hairy men,
Vague, dim traditions, dim with eld,
Of other lands and ages when
Nor ices were, nor anything;
But ever one warm, restful spring
Of radiant sunlight: stories told
By dauntless men of giant mold,
Who kept their cavern's icy mouth
Ice-locked, and hungered where they sat,
With sad eyes tow'rd the south:

"Tales of a time ere hate began,
Of herds of reindeer, wild beasts tamed,
When man walked forth in love with man,

Walked naked, and was not ashamed;
Of how a brother beast he slew,
Then night, and all sad sorrows knew;
How tame beasts were no longer tame;
How God drew His great sword of flame
And drove man naked to the snow,
Till, pitying, He made of skins
A coat, and clothed him so.

"And, true or not true, still the same,
I saw continually at night
That far, bright, flashing sword of flame,
Misnamed the Borealis light;
I saw my men, in coats of skin
As God had clothed them, felt the sin
And suffering of that first death
Each day in every icy breath.
Then why should I still disbelieve
These tales of fairer lands than mine,
And let my lady grieve?

IX

"Yea, I would find that land for her!
Then dogs, and sleds, and swift reindeer;
Huge, hairy men, all mailed in fur,
Who knew not yet the name of fear,
Nor knew fatigue, nor aught that ever
To this day has balked endeavor.
And we swept forth, while wide, swift wings
Still sought the Pole in endless strings.
I left her sitting looking south,
Still leaning, looking to the sun,—
My kisses on her mouth!

X

"Far toward the north, so tall, so far,
One tallest ice shaft starward stood—
Stood as if 'twere itself a star,
Scarce fallen from its sisterhood.
Tip-top the glowing apex there
Upreared a huge white polar bear;
He pushed his swart nose up and out,
Then walked the North Star round about,
Below the Great Bear of the main,
The upper main, and as if chained,
Chained with a star-linked chain.

XI

"And we pushed on, up, on, and on,
Until, as in the world of dreams,
We found the very doors of dawn
With warm sun bursting through the seams.
We brake them through, then down, far down,
Until, as in some park-set town,
We found lost Eden. Very rare
The fruit, and all the perfumed air
So sweet, we sat us down to feed
And rest, without a thought or care,
Or ever other need.

"For all earth's pretty birds were here;
And women fair, and very fair;
Sweet song was in the atmosphere,
Nor effort was, nor noise, nor care.
As cocoons from their silken house
Wing forth and in the sun carouse,
My men let fall their housings and

Passed on and on, far down the land
Of purple grapes and poppy bloom.
Such warm, sweet land, such peaceful land!
Sweet peace and sweet perfume!

"And I pushed down ere I returned
To climb the cold world's walls of snow,
And saw where earth's heart beat and burned,
An hundred sultry leagues below;
Saw deep seas set with deep-sea isles
Of waving verdure; miles on miles
Of rising sea-birds with their broods,
In all their noisy, happy moods!
Aye, then I knew earth has a heart,
That Nature wastes nor space or place,
But husbands every part.

XII

"My reindeer fretted: I turned back
For her, the heart of me, my soul!
Ah, then, how swift, how white my track!
All Paradise beneath the Pole
Were but a mockery till she
Should share its dreamful sweets with me. . .
I know not well what next befell,
Save that white heaven grew black hell.
She sat with sad face to the south,
Still sat, sat still; but she was dead—
My kisses on her mouth.

XIII

"What else to do but droop and die?
But dying, how my poor soul yearned

To fly as swift south birds may fly—
To pass that way her eyes had turned,
The dear days she had sat with me,
And search and search eternity!
And, do you know, I surely know
That God has given us to go
The way we will in life or death—
To go, to grow, or good or ill,
As one may draw a breath?"

PART FOURTH

I

Nay, turn not to the past for light;
Nay, teach not Pagan tale forsooth!
Behind lie heathen gods and night,
Before lifts high, white holy truth.
Sweet Orpheus looked back, and lo,
Hell met his eyes and endless woe!
Lot's wife looked back, and for this fell
To something even worse than hell.
Let us have faith, sail, seek and find
The new world and the new world's ways:
Blind Homer led the blind!

II

Come, let us kindle Faith in light!
Yon eagle climbing to the sun
Keeps not the straightest course in sight,
But room and reach of wing and run
Of rounding circle all are his,
Till he at last bathes in the light
Of worlds that look far down on this
Arena's battle for the right.
The stoutest sail that braves the breeze,
The bravest battle ship that rides,
Rides rounding up the seas.

Come, let us kindle faith in man!
What though yon eagle, where he swings,
May moult a feather in God's plan
Of broader, stronger, better wings!

Why, let the moulted feathers lie
As thick as leaves upon the lawn:
These be but proof we cleave the sky
And still round on and on and on.
Fear not for moulting feathers; nay,
But rather fear when all seems fair,
And care is far away.

Come, let us kindle faith in God!
He made, He kept, He still can keep.
The storm obeys His burning rod,
The storm brought Christ to walk the deep.
Trust God to round His own at will;
Trust God to keep His own for aye—
Or strife or strike, or well or ill;
An eagle climbing up the sky—
A meteor down from heaven hurled—
Trust God to round, reform, or rock
His new-born baby world.

III

How full the great, full-hearted seas
That lave high, white Alaska's feet!
How densely green the dense green trees!
How sweet the smell of wood! how sweet!
What sense of high, white newness where
This new world breathes the new, blue air
That never breath of man or breath
Of mortal thing considereth!
And O, that Borealis light!
The angel with his flaming sword
And never sense of night!

IV

Are these the walls of Paradise—
Yon peaks the gates man may not pass?
Lo, everlasting silence lies
Along their gleaming ways of glass!
Just silence and that sword of flame;
Just silence and Jehovah's name,
Where all is new, unnamed, and white!
Come, let us read where angels write—
"In the beginning God"—aye, these
The waters where God's Spirit moved;
These, these, the very seas!

Just one deep, wave-washed chariot wheel:
Such sunset as that far first day!
An unsheathed sword of flame and steel;
Then battle flashes; then dismay,
And mad confusion of all hues
That earth and heaven could infuse,
Till all hues softly fused and blent
In orange worlds of wonderment:
Then dying day, in kingly ire,
Struck back with one last blow, and smote
The world with molten fire.

So fell Alaska, proudly, dead
In battle harness where he fought.
But falling, still high o'er his head
Far flashed his sword in crimson wrought,
Till came his kingly foeman, Dusk,
In garments moist with smell of musk.
The bent moon moved down heaven's steeps
Low-bowed, as when a woman weeps;
Bowed low, half-veiled in widowhood;

Then stars tiptoed the peaks in gold
And burned brown sandal-wood.

Fit death of Day; fit burial rite
Of white Alaska! Let us lay
This leaflet 'mid the musky night
Upon his tomb. Come, come away;
For Phaon talks and Sappho turns
To where the light of heaven burns
To love light, and she leans to hear
With something more than mortal ear.
The while the ship has pushed her prow
So close against the fir-set shore
You breathe the spicy bough.

V

Some red men by the low, white beach;
Camp fires, belts of dense, black fir:
She leans as if she still would reach
To him the very soul of her.
The red flames cast a silhouette
Against the snow, above the jet
Black, narrow night of fragrant fir,
Behold, what ardent worshiper!
Lim'd out against a glacier peak,
With strong arms crossed upon his breast;
The while she feels him speak:

"How glad was I to walk with Death
Far down his dim, still, trackless lands,
Where wind nor wave nor any breath
Broke ripples o'er the somber sands.
I walked with Death as eagerly
As ever I had sailed this sea.

Then on and on I searched, I sought,
Yet all my seeking came to naught.
I sailed by pleasant, peopled isles
Of song and summer time; I sailed
Ten thousand weary miles!

"I heard a song! She had been sad,
So sad and ever drooping she;
How could she, then, in song be glad
The while I searched? It could not be.
And yet that voice! so like it seemed,
I questioned if I heard or dreamed.
She smiled on me. This made me scorn
My very self; for I was born
To loyalty. I would be true
Unto my love, my soul, my self,
Whatever death might do.

"I fled her face, her proud, fair face,
Her songs that won a world to her.
Had she sat songless in her place,
Sat with no single worshiper,
Sat with bowed head, sad-voiced, alone,
I might have known! I might have known!
But how could I, the savage, know
This sun, contrasting with that snow,
Would waken her great soul to song
That still thrills all the ages through?
I blindly did such wrong!

"Again I fled. I ferried gods;
Yet, pining still, I came to pine
Where drowsy Lesbos Bacchus nods
And drowned my soul in Cyprian wine.
Drowned! drowned my poor, sad soul so deep,

I sank to where damned serpents creep!
Then slowly upward; round by round
I toiled, regained this vantage-ground.
And now, at last, I claim mine own,
As some long-banished king comes back
To battle for his throne."

VI

I do not say that thus he spake
By word of mouth, by human speech;
The sun in one swift flash will take
A photograph of space and reach
The realm of stars. A soul like his
Is like unto the sun in this:
Her soul the plate placed to receive
The swift impressions, to believe,
To doubt no more than you might doubt
The wondrous midnight world of stars
That dawn has blotted out.

VII

And Phaon loved her; he who knew
The North Pole and the South, who named
The stars for her, strode forth and slew
Black, hairy monsters no man tamed;
And all before fair Greece was born,
Or Lesbos yet knew night or morn.
No marvel that she knew him when
He came, the chiefest of all men.
No marvel that she loved and died,
And left such marbled bits of song—
Of broken Phidian pride.

VIII

Oh, but for that one further sense
For man that man shall yet possess!
That sense that puts aside pretense
And sees the truth, that scorns to guess
Or grope, or play at blindman's buff,
But knows rough diamonds in the rough!
Oh, well for man when man shall see,
As see he must man's destiny!
Oh, well when man shall know his mate,
One-winged and desolate, lives on
And bravely dares to wait!

IX

Full morning found them, and the land
Received them, and the chapel gray;
Some Indian huts on either hand,
A smell of pine, a flash of spray,—
White, frozen rivers of the sky
Far up the glacial steeps hard by.
Far ice-peaks flashed with sudden light,
As if they would illume the rite,
As if they knew his story well,
As if they knew that form, that face,
And all that Time could tell.

X

They passed dusk chieftans two by two,
With totem gods and stroud and shell
They slowly passed, and passing through,
He bought of all—he knew them well.
And one, a bent old man and blind,

He put his hands about, and kind
And strange words whispered in his ear,
So soft, his dull soul could but hear.
And hear he surely did, for he,
With full hands, lifted up his face
And smiled right pleasantly.

How near, how far, how fierce, how tame!
The polar bear, the olive branch;
The dying exile, Christ's sweet name—
Vast silence! then the avalanche!
How much this little church to them—
Alaska and Jerusalem!
The pair passed in, the silent pair
Fell down before the altar there,
The Greek before the gray Greek cross,
And Phaon at her side at last,
For all her weary loss.

The bearded priest came, and he laid
His two hands forth and slowly spake
Strange, solemn words, and slowly prayed,
And blessed them there, for Jesus' sake.
Then slowly they arose and passed,
Still silent, voiceless to the last.
They passed: her eyes were to his eyes,
But his were lifted to the skies,
As looking, looking, that lorn night,
Before the birth of God's first-born
As praying still for Light.

XI

So Phaon knew and Sappho knew
Nor night nor sadness any more. . . .

How new the old world, ever new,
When white Love walks the shining shore!
They found their long-lost Eden, found
Her old, sweet songs; such dulcet sound
Of harmonies as soothe the ear
When Love and only Love can hear.
They found lost Eden; lilies lay
Along their path, whichever land
They journeyed from that day.

XII

They never died. Great loves live on.
You need not die and dare the skies
In forms that poor creeds hinge upon
To pass the gates of Paradise.
I know not if that sword of flame
Still lights the North, and leads the same
As when he passed the gates of old.
I know not if they braved the bold,
Defiant walls that fronted them
Where awful Saint Elias broods,
Wrapped in God's garment-hem.

I only know they found the lost,
The long-lost Eden, found all fair
Where naught had been but hail and frost;
As Love finds Eden anywhere.
And wouldst thou, too, live on and on?
Then walk with Nature till the dawn.
Aye, make thy soul worth saving—save
Thy soul from darkness and the grave.
Love God not overmuch, but love

God's world which He called very good;
Then lo, Love's white sea-dove!

XIII

I know not where lies Eden-land;
I only know 't is like unto
God's kingdom, ever right at hand—
Ever right here in reach of you.
Put forth thy hand, or great or small,
In storm or sun, by sea or wood,
And say, as God hath said of all,
Behold, it all is very good.
I know not where lies Eden-land;
I only say receive the dove:
I say put forth thy hand.

* * * * *
* * * * *

ADIOS

ADIOS

And here, sweet friend, I go my way
Alone, as I have lived, alone
A little way, a brief half day,
And then, the restful, white milestone.
I know not surely where or when,
But surely know we meet again,
As surely know we love anew
In grander life the good and true.
But why assume to guide or guess?
Behold our stars are shepherded—
Madonna, Shepherdess.
Enough to know that I and you
Shall breathe together there as here
Some clearer, sweeter atmosphere:
Shall walk high, wider ways above
Our petty selves, shall lean to lead
Man up and up in thought and deed. . . .
Dear soul, sweet friend, I love you, love
The love that led you patient through
This wilderness of words in quest
Of strange wild flowers from my West;
But here, dear heart, Adieu.

I

Yon great chained sea-ship chafes to be
Once more unleashed without the Gate
On proud Balboa's boundless sea,
And I chafe with her, for I hate
The rust of rest, the dull repose,
The fawning breath of changeful foes,
Whose blame through all my bitter days

I have endured; spare me their praise!
I go, full hearted, grateful, glad
Of strength from dear good mother earth;
And yet am I full sad.

II

Could I but teach man to believe—
Could I but make small men to grow,
To break frail spider-webs that weave
About their thews and bind them low;
Could I but sing one song and slay
Grim Doubt; I then could go my way
In tranquil silence, glad, serene,
And satisfied, from off the scene.
But ah, this disbelief, this doubt,
This doubt of God, this doubt of good,—
The damned spot will not out!

III

Grew once a rose within my room
Of perfect hue, of perfect health;
Of such perfection and perfume,
It filled my poor house with its wealth.
Then came the pessimist who knew
Not good or grace, but overthrew
My rose, and in the broken pot
Nosed fast for slugs within the rot.
He found, found with exulting pride,—
A baby butterfly it was;
The while my rose-tree died.

* * * * *

IV

Yea, he did hurt me. Joy in this.
Receive great joy at last to know,
Since pain is all your world of bliss,
That ye did, hounding, hurt me so!
But mute as bayed stag on his steeps,
Who keeps his haunts, and, bleeding, keeps
His breast turned, watching where they come,
Kept I, defiant, and as dumb.
But comfort ye; your work was done
With devils' cunning, like the mole
That lets the life-sap run.

And my revenge? My vengeance is
That I have made one rugged spot
The fairer; that I fashioned this
While envy, hate, and falsehood shot
Rank poison; that I leave to those
Who shot, for arrows, each a rose;
Aye, labyrinths of rose and wold,
Acacias garmented in gold,
Bright fountains, where birds come to drink;
Such clouds of cunning, pretty birds,
And tame as you can think.

V

Come here when I am far away,
Fond lovers of this lovely land,
And sit quite still and do not say,
Turn right or left, or lift a hand,
But sit beneath my kindly trees
And gaze far out yon sea of seas:—
These trees, these very stones, could tell

How long I loved them, and how well—
And maybe I shall come and sit
Beside you; sit so silently
You will not reck of it.

VI

The old desire of far, new lands,
The thirst to learn, to still front storms,
To bend my knees, to lift my hands
To God in all His thousand forms—
These lure and lead as pleasantly
As old songs sung anew at sea.
But, storied lands or stormy deeps,
I will my ashes to my steeps—
I will my steeps, green cross, red rose,
To those who love the beautiful—
Come, learn to be of those.

* * * * *

VII

The sun has draped his couch in red;
Night takes the warm world in his arms
And turns to their espousal bed
To breathe the perfume of her charms:
The great sea calls, and I descend
As to the call of some strong friend.
I go, not hating any man,
But loving Earth as only can
A lover suckled at her breast
Of beauty from his babyhood,
And roam to truly rest.

VIII

God is not far; man is not far
From Heaven's porch, where pæans roll.
Man yet shall speak from star to star
In silent language of the soul;
Yon star-strewn skies be but a town,
With angels passing up and down.
"I leave my peace with you." Lo! these
His seven wounds, the Pleiades
Pierce Heaven's porch. But, resting there,
The new moon rocks the Child Christ in
Her silver rocking-chair.

HINTS FROM THE HIGHTS

HINTS FROM THE HIGHTS

And oh, the voices I have heard!
Such visions where the morning grows—
A brother's soul in some sweet bird,
A sister's spirit in a rose.

And oh, the beauty I have found!
Such beauty, beauty everywhere;
The beauty creeping on the ground,
The beauty singing through the air.

The love in all, the good, the worth,
The God in all, or dusk or dawn;
Good will to man and peace on earth;
The morning stars sing on and on.

One final word to the coming poets of the Sierras and the great Sea and the Universal Heart. For I would have them, not like the very many cedars but like the very few sequoias. I would have them not fear the elements, or seek station or office from any one; to owe no man; only God. Yes, I know—who should better know?—how long and lonely and terribly dark the night is when not well nourished and encouraged by earnest friends; but I have seen some, better, abler than I, halt, falter, fall, from very excess of kindly praise and patronage. My coming poets, there are offices, favors, high honors within the gift of good men, and good men are many; but the gift of song is from God only. Choose, and adhere to the end; for we cannot serve two masters. A good citizen you may be, have love, peace, plenty to the end, but

you shall not even so much as ascend the mountain that looks down upon the Promised Land, however much you may be made to believe you have attained it if you follow mammon. On the other hand, plain, simple, apart, alone, God only at your side, you must toil by day and meditate by night, remembering always that the only true dignity is true humility; remembering always that the only true humility is true dignity. Poverty, pain, persecution, ingratitude, scorn, and may be obscurity at the end. But always and through all, and over and above all, Faith and Hope and Charity. The greatest and humblest that has been, your one exemplor. And so, following Him, shall you never answer back except and only by some white banner set on your own splendid and inaccessible summits: the flag of forgiveness and good will.

If then, thus informed by one whose feet are worn, the starry steeps of song be still your aspiration, don your Capuchin garb and with staff and sandal shoon go forth alone to find your lofty acre, to plant and water your tree, to take your eternal lessons from Him, through the toil of bee and the song of bird. Nor shall you in your lofty seclusion and security from the friction and roar of trade for one day escape or seek to escape your duties to man. The poets are God's sentries set on the high watch-towers of the world. You must see with the true foresight of the seer of old the coming invasions, the internal evils, the follies of your age, and not only give warning but bravely lead to triumph or perish, as the prophets of old, if need be.

For example, by what right shall a man con-

tinue to devote his life to getting and getting and getting from those about him, and, fostered by the State in his continual getting, cut the State off without even the traditional shilling when he has done with his gatherings? All great men have to leave all their gettings to the State when they go. Why shall not a rich man? If all the Rothschilds should die tomorrow and leave all their riches to England they would not all together leave her as much as Shakespeare left. And you, too, shall break the horns of strange gods, coming from over this ocean or that. It is only a snake that has two heads or a double tongue.

Take another example, one of the monstrous evils of this hour: none the less monstrous, only the harder to destroy because encouraged and under the protection of every church in the land. Today we are wasting enough to buy a house and provide a pension for every widow. Poor old women are made slaves, down on their knees scrubbing to pay monstrous ghouls for tawdry funerals, while the examples of Dickens, Hugo and the like great men are ignored. And largely, too, because our own, sentimental weaklings choose to please and be made popular by catering to the dead in the grave instead of the living God over all; doleful night birds singing of God's Acre, as if all acres were not God's. When the great poet comes he will lead his people to put all this in the hands of the State, so that we may all be resolved, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, simply and alike, rich and poor, having choice only as to the kind, not the price of funerals.

Perhaps the greatest source of sorrow, sin, in

this, our commercial age, is the periodical "hard times." There should be nothing of that sort. True, this age of gold and of getting will pass as the age of stone and man eating passed, but our work is with our own age. Then, can the seer, the prophet, priest, poet sing, and so teach a way to avert this tidal wave of calamity that every few years submerges the entire Christian world? Let us look about us. In the first place why does China in all her thousands of prosperous years, notwithstanding her millions of poor, never have "hard times?" Simply because her people pay their debts. That is the secret of it. At the end of each year each man pays his debts; then there is a feast, and not till then. The Jews were not foolish in their generation; they are not foolish now you will agree. And why had they never such periods of depression? For the same reason; they paid their debts, paid their debts every seven years instead of every single year. And when we shall have a law like that, and live by it, the very name "hard times" in this land and age of boundless abundance can be turned over to the historian forever. The Jews let business go at loose ends nearly seven years, quite as long, perhaps, as it is best to let weak human nature run without adjustment. Then they compelled an absolute settlement; then they, too, had the great feast, and all began business anew. Even the Romans, and more than once—but only when compelled—burned their books of mortgage, debt, and taxes.

As for our own laws of limitations, said to be fashioned after those of the Bible, they are simply a delusion and a blank falsehood. The

money lender sits down with you, counts up the interest, compounds it, summons you to a new mortgage, and you get up and go forth tied just one knot tighter than before. And this is our "Statute of Limitations!"

What, this is not the poet's work! Sir, truth is the poet's sword, and his battle is for mankind. I like the story of that Orpheus piping on a hillside till people sat at his feet to hear him play; and so built a city there. Beautiful, divinely beautiful, the poet's story of the old shepherd king who had his strength restored each time the giant threw him down to earth. The people came crowding to the cities then as now. Ah! never was a great poet so needed as now. These themes, or such themes are crying out continuously. The deaf do not hear; the blind cannot see. The seer only can see. "Let me sing the songs and I care not who make the laws."

Clearly then, you are not to go apart in consecration for your own ease, least of all for your own glory. The only glory that can long attend you or at all survive you is the glory of doing good; defending the weak, guiding the strong, making the blind to see; finding your reward entirely in the fact that you loyally love the true, the good and beautiful, this trinity in one.

The undebated lesson after the goodness of man and the beauty of the world is the immortality of man. Yes, there may be those who do not live again. You may sow your field as carefully as you can, yet there are many worthless grains that will not come up, but will rot and resolve again into earth. And may it not

be that this fearful disease of unbelief is a sort of crucial test? May it not be, that if you be so weak as to say you shall be blown out as a candle and so drop into everlasting darkness, that it shall be so?

We begin the next life where we leave off in this. I see this in the little seeds that sift down from the trees, and lie under the shroud of snow in the hollow of His hand, the winter through, waiting the roaring March winds to trumpet through the pines and proclaim the resurrection. I read it in every blade of grass that carpets God's footstool. Every spear is a spear to battle for this truth. Every blade of grass is a bent saber waving us forward with living evidence of immortality, for it has seen the resurrection.

You say this is not poetry; that I teach only plain common sense? I assure you that the only true poetry is plain common sense. The only true poetry is *truth:* the RIGHT: HEART.

Truth is, truth was, truth always will be. No poet can create or destroy one particle of truth, any more than you can create or destroy a particle of gold. He can only give it a new form, garment it with splendor, and set it in a new light. Were I to try to define poetry, I should say that poetry is the divinely beautiful woman Truth, gorgeously yet modestly and most perfectly gowned.

As for methods or detail of teaching the divine art of song, I have none. There can be none.

Some general rules, of course, prevail. The first is some concession to the fact that the world is going at a swifter pace than of old. Even Homer could not find either publisher or reader

today. Therefore, cut, cut, cut. Then work it over, and cut again. Then, in most cases,—burn. Don't be afraid to rub out the sum. You are only at school. And above all, don't write for either fame or money. Write for your own soul, the good, the beautiful. First, the kingdom of Heaven, then all the rest.

Nor shall the true artist fear hunger. No one who is willing to work can go hungry, and no one who is not willing to work, and live simply and apart from the tumult of trade, should aspire to be a poet, painter, composer, or fashioner of beautiful forms. For on all triumph in this life is laid a mighty tribute. You must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Take counsel of nature. Look at the trees casting down their golden leaves generously at the end of the year's fruitage, fearing nothing. They lift their arms in attitude of prayer, certain that they shall be garmented again, and glorified, and made even more beautiful than before, all in due season.

"Look at the rose,—the generous rose,
That tears the silken tassel of her purse,
And all her perfume o'er the garden throws."

In brief, to be a poet, artist of any sort, you must not only feel your art, but live your art; humbly, patiently, continually live it. And do not disdain others in other walks of life. I repeat, the greatest poets never penned a line. Let us concede the same in other walks, for it is true.

In the line of economy, I urge that artists, if

not all men, should rest and rise with the birds. There is a deal of nonsense about "midnight oil," and little or no good. God made the day for man; but the night for beasts; and beasts have rights.

In the same line, it is foolishness to fight back. See what a saving of time, temper, energy, by refusing to answer the low and envious who make a target of your fame. Equip yourself as best you can, and then descend into the arena to fight, and to fight forward, not back. The man who stops and faces about to hit back is a weak man, and ready to run. No truly great artist will ever hit back.

I hold, with Socrates, that a man's first duty is to the state, and that however delightful it might be to hit back, and then house in Arcadia and forget all care, we are all born to responsibilities, and must each account for the talent given.

And now, with this final appeal to the young sentinels on the watch-towers of the world, I conclude with this one first, last, and only comment: Read, follow, believe, *The Book;* because, for stateliness of style, simplicity of diction, directness of thought, and majesty of utterance, it is unmatched in all the array of books, old or new, to be found on the shelves of the British Museum.

Let the young author, whom I hope to help, take the very first line in this neglected work, take the very first words, "In the beginning." Lay down your book now. Pause right here and contemplate, comprehend if you can, even though it be ever so little, the awful force and directness and simplicity of this. "In the

beginning." Where? When? What? Above all, when? How fearfully and incomprehensibly far away!

But let us go on with the line: "In the beginning God—" Pause here long, my young author. Now add the next words, and read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth—" Now take the next: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light."

How many pages, books, would a modern author devote to telling this?

Mark you, I am offering this in quite a worldly way. Although it is the boast of too many of us that these words are entirely the work of a man, as for myself, I can only say, "If so, oh for another such man!"

I was asked to address the Jews in their synagogue here recently on the subject of poetry. I searched for poetry in many pages; waded through modern books, and kept going back, back, back, till the very fountain-head was reached. And here, and only here, did I find poetry in all its largeness and splendor of thought and utterance. Take the picture of Jacob blessing his sons. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost."

To a man who has seen little of life, less of death, this last quotation may mean nothing. But I have stood by the deathbed of too many of the old gold-hunters to miss the realistic truth

and simplicity of this sentence. Ah! their weary, weary feet. They had wandered as Jacob wandered. Their feet were weary as his feet were weary. And I know, as surely as I know I live, that he died just as it is written in this grand and neglected record: "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost."

Give the simple, naked truth. Leave imaginings to the reader, for the reader is rarely the fool we conceive him to be. The fact is, the world is so flooded with our work, that it has not nearly time to get through with it, and right soon we must return to simplicity, if we hope to be read.

And not only simplicity of motive, but majesty of utterance must be ours. To find this largeness, brevity, and majesty in its most real and perfect form, we must go back to the very heart of this great, neglected book. You will hardly find this perfect combination of great qualities in poetry this side of the book of Job.

"Where is the way where light dwelleth?

"And as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . .

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail? . . .

"Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? . . .

"The hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"

These lines, with their eternal inquiry, their knowledge of nature, their faith in a being above man, glorious and stately figures, are taken at

random from a half-page of the oldest written poem extant—so old that it is new. It was written when man was nearer to God than now. It was written when the page of nature was new; when the whole world was poetry.

"Where is the way where light dwelleth?" The golden doors of dawn, where are they? And as for darkness, with all its majesty, its mystery, its large solemnity, its somber and silent dominion of the universal world, where is the place of it?

"Hath the rain a father? And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"

These awful elements of nature are the same as when they first fell from the finger of God. The great, white, beautiful, high-born rain is still the same as when the majestic poet of old sat and sang so close to Nature, that he heard the beating of her heart. The fierce and fervid way of the lightning up the walls of heaven, the awful autograph of God, written audibly on the porch of His eternal house, is the same as of old. All, all are precisely the same; but our poets see these things no more now. Nature, God, has not forgotten us, but our poets have forgotten Nature, God!

How long does it take to grow a rose tree in a garden? How long are we willing to sit by and watch the growth of an olive grove? One, two, five, ten years? And yet how long is it since you planted in your soul, in the richest center of your heart, the love of nature, the love of beauty—beauty of form; beauty of light; beauty of color; beauty of life?

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward

in Eden. . . . And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree *that is pleasant* to the sight and good for food."

Please observe that "every tree that was pleasant to the sight" came first. That which was "good for food" came last. The soul was to be fed first, here in this garden which the Lord God planted eastward in Eden; the body, last. Ah! far, very far, have we wandered away, like lost children, from the place where "the Lord God planted every tree that is pleasant to the sight"; and no prophets sit by the wayside, as of old, and cry aloud to the people, "Where is the way where light dwelleth?"

Were I to undertake to write down the alphabet—the very first lesson in the appreciation—of poetry, I should begin with the first lesson of God, the very first: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." The next lesson, the next letter of the alphabet, would be given in the garden. I would plant a tree "pleasant to the sight." I would mark the miracle of its development, its purity, its perfume, its perfect form and continual comeliness, its steady and upright stand against storms that sometimes seem almost to uproot it, and yet all for its own good; I would catch the airy colors of that tree, mark all its moods, the light and shade; would read its leaves through and through each day; I would listen to the song of the wind in its branches, for this is poetry—God's poetry.

But who of us cares now for "the way where light dwelleth?" Who cares now for the poetry written on the lisping leaves of a tree? Who cares now for "every tree that is pleasant to the

sight"? Man has built for himself huge walls to shut *out* the light. The flowers that blossom continually along the pages of the prophets of old he never sees any more. The parables of that divinely beautiful young Jew, Jesus Christ, in the language of flowers all over the land, are to him as a book that is sealed. Yet the world keeps continually crying out, "Where are the prophets? Where are the poets?" I answer, Can a prophet prophesy without faith?"

I say you might as well send a man out in the darkness to gather flowers on yon sunny hillside as to ask poetry of an age when faith and hope and charity are rudely thrust aside by the hard, mailed hand of doubt. Yea, the blind man may gather some few flowers as the night goes by, but he will gather weeds and thistles and poisonous plants as well. We have gathered some few sweet flowers of song by the long, long road that reaches back to humble Bethlehem, but we have gathered weeds; much that is worse than weeds.

On the glowing olive-set hills of Syria, on the burning sands of Arabia, by the blazing shores of the Red Sea, where Moses saw the face of God in the burning bush, where men believed, and when men believed, when they had faith in God and hope in the Promised Land, there and then was poetry conceived. The forty years in the wilderness, the full fervor of heat and light in the open fields, the communion, heart to heart, with nature—there, in the wilderness and by the wayside, was planted the germ of songs that have outlived the thousand thousand books written within the walls of luxurious Europe.

Do you recall the time in our history when the

sermon and the song were heard from Maine to the banks of the Mississippi? when the Peter Cartwrights and the Lorenzo Dows blazed the way through the wilderness, for civilization to follow? Ah! there was faith then; there was hope then. By the light of their cabin fires these simple Methodists prayed and sang and believed. They, and they alone, after the praying Puritans, set deep in the soil of freedom the foundation-stones of this nation. By the light of their cabin fires they married their daughters in Faith; by the light of their camp-fires they buried their dead in Hope. They, in that grand pilgrimage pointing to this westmost shore, planted seed that should have flowered long ere this by this great sea. But what followed? What followed over the graves of those grand and simple-minded old Methodists—those prophets in buckskin? What followed but the golden calf, with his cloven foot? The seed they planted was trampled into dust, so that today we not only have no poet, but we have not even the hope of a poet. For we have no faith; we have no charity; we have little or no real religion at all.

Not long ago, a rich San Francisco preacher came to see me where I was at work among my olive trees.

"Pretty rough piece of ground you have here."

"Yes, sir; rough underfoot, but as smooth overhead as any man's land."

"Ahem! Will olives pay here?"

This was his first and last concern. The clink of the golden chain which bound that man's neck to the golden calf with the cloven foot was heard

to rattle on my stony steeps as he spoke. Will olives pay here?

Pay? Pay? In every breath of the sweet sea-wind that lifts their silvery leaves in the sun I am paid; paid in imperishable silver every day. I see in their every leaf the olive branch of the dove of old. The olive branch and the breast of the dove are of the same subdued silver hue today as in the days of Noah—as if the olive branch and the dove had in some sort kept companionship ever since the days of the deluge.

If there is a poem, written or unwritten, a song, sung or unsung, sweeter or more plaintive than that of the dove singing in the silver-gray olive tree on the mountain steeps, singing in that sad, far-off way, as if the waste of waters still encompassed her, and "she found no place for the sole of her foot,"—if there is anything at all that is higher or holier with messages to man, I have not found it.

And yet, still must we ask, When will our great interpreter come? When will the true prophet, priest, poet, preacher come to us? For we are continually reminded that it is by the voice of the poet only that a nation is allowed to survive. Jerusalem has been permitted to come down to us forever glorified; she cherished the poets. But where is Babylon, who cast the prophets into the lions' den? Nineveh was "an exceeding great city of three days' journey." But Nineveh would not hear; and where is Nineveh now? Yet Jerusalem, the city of poetry and song, survives. And this is simply because she had Faith and Hope; and so had her poets,

and she did not despise them; and her poets made her immortal. And so of Athens.

True or false, the Greeks had gods, even the Unknown God of which Paul spoke; and they BELIEVED. They had Faith and Hope. And so their poets sang, sang in marble. They sang in music, sang in the eternal melody of beauty; and their country lives forever.

No, the poet cannot prove to you the immortality of the soul. There are things that rise above the ordinary rules of evidence, and this is one of them. He cannot prove to you, under the strict rules of legal evidence, even that the sun will rise tomorrow. But it will surely rise. And just as surely shall the soul of man be saved; if it be worth saving, make your soul worth saving. That is all.

Let us remember always that man is not wicked, but weak, ignorant—piteously weak in his ignorance. But let us be patient with him. The best of us have blemishes, weak spots here and there, now and then. There are spots even in the sun. There is also an infinity of light. God made the spots, and He will look to the spots. Let us concern ourselves with the light.

And ever and ever His boundless blue,
And ever and ever His green, green sod.
And ever and ever between the two
Walk the wonderful winds of God.

More than twenty years ago I sat down here on a mountain side with mother and began to plant trees. Men and women came to work with us and to rest with us, men and women from colleges and universities. No one was ever asked to come, no one was ever asked to go. Not a dollar was ever passed between us. The young men were ready to work when anything was to be done. The women were useful as companions for my venerable mother.

Some students, not attached to schools, stayed a long time. One woman with her son stayed five years. Another stayed three years. They were a benediction for mother. Some men stayed one, two and three years. One a Nipponese, now famous, stayed seven years. The stranger always found a cot, oftentimes a cottage all to himself. He always found a storehouse with simple supplies, and even after the place was planted to trees and built up, there was always wood to get, cows to look after, horses, hens and so on,—and a gentle foreman, Captain A. W. Darling, a Wisconsin veteran of the Civil War, who had the management of the place from the first, to tell what should be done. His effort always was to keep students from doing too much work rather than too little.

These students, after having helped to plant more than fifty thousand forest trees, decided to build a monument on the spot where Fremont had camped at the time when he named the Golden Gate. They wrote to Mrs. Fremont in Los Angeles. Here are a few paragraphs from one of Mrs. Fremont's letters touching the location of the site and suggesting the simple

character of the monument such as she has described. She says:

"When Bierstadt went to California to study its scenery (and the Rocky Mountains *en route*), we gave him letters to Starr King and other friends. It was about April of 1863. In giving him a commission to paint for us the Golden Gate, with the setting sun lighting the pathway into it, both of us, Mr. Fremont and myself, gave him fully our feeling. I clearly remember Mr. Fremont saying he must see the sunset from the Contra Costa, as he had to realize the force and splendid appropriateness of the name in its scenic sense, apart from the other idea of the gateway of commerce. Bierstadt made a grand picture. When we had to sell what would bring needed money, Commodore Garrison bought this for $4,000, just what we had given Bierstadt.

"My daughter, who was from her seventh year a constant companion of her father on long horseback rides and days of working explorations on the Mariposas, as well as many a long ride around San Francisco—as often in quieter times on the Hudson—remembers many and many a talk on views, on physical geography, on beautiful camps, for she has her father's silent delight in nature and is his true child in loving to read of, study and inform herself of geographical travel. She says she is sure you are right.

"The great rock stamps it. He loved a mass of detached rock. . . . When I was written to by a New York friend of an intended monument to the general, I asked that they would spare him the commonplaces that made such

sadly mourning-stones usurp our finer ideas. If they must, then put up a great rock, a rough mass of granite, such as he had carved the emblem of the cross upon 'according to the custom of early travelers'—for he felt the strong, invisible power that grasped the heavens and the earth—and on it put only his name."

My manager, the old soldier, not only planned and directed the building of the Fremont tower on the spot indicated by Mrs. Fremont, but he directed the building of stone walls and terraces, miles of them. It is wonderful how much work can be done here in twenty years where there are nearly three hundred and sixty-five days in the year in which to work.

As for my own part I have, during these twenty years past, when at home, put in the first few hours of the day with my books and papers and the rest of the time at planting and trimming or helping to plant and trim the forest trees. And, oh, the dignity of a tree, the truth, the courage of a tree! The companionship of a tree is the most inspiring in all the world. The very name Nazareth means the place of woods. In volume III is a picture in the edge of our forest. These trees I planted with my own hand where there was only dust and desert when mother and I began here. Think of fifty thousand such trees and you can have some idea of the satisfaction of planting and growing a Nazareth, a "place of the woods." Look at the photograph in volume IV, and see what a happy Christmas party is there on the grass under the trees where only arid desolation was a little time ago.

To all those up and down the earth who are solicitous about my fortunes, and they are many, let me say frankly I am one of the richest men at this moment on this continent; and that my wealth consists mainly of content; content and great good health, born mainly of hard work and simple common sense habits of life.

Here on my shelf of the mountains that look down upon the Golden Gate, I have a wilderness of wood, a dozen flowing springs, air of the best on earth, and a place for every man to pitch his tent who wants to freely share my wealth. But this is no airy, fairy Brook Farm. Here is required not only hard work and incidental health and content, but here is demanded solid common sense. As my first requirement here is a lot of good, plain common sense. And were you to press me to say what is the next best and greatest requirement to make success here, I would say perhaps a little more and a better quality of such common sense.

More than twenty years ago, while feeling my way along here and trying to use what little common sense I then had, I wrote a small book, "The Building of the City Beautiful." It is published by the proprietor of the *Arena* magazine, Boston. Get that little book, read it, and learn what I at least tried to do before trending this way or writing to me for information.

And here at the end of this volume be not impatient that you have found much of self in these talks to young scribes from title-leaf to colophon, nor count it at all selfish. I had my lessons to teach to those whose desire to learn is above cheap curiosity, and with such souls there

can be no sacrifice of true dignity, for here familiarity is not vulgarity. The best guide-book to me, through a strange land, is the story of another's journey there. Let me say to the pilgrims of song, in conclusion, Be not afraid. Sing from the heart, to the heart. Sing as the birds sing. Let the alleged lion roar. Let the dog bark. These beasts are of the earth. The birds are of the air. The dog must bay the moon; and the brighter the moon, the louder the dog. . . .

You want to see San Francisco? Well, you must come to Oakland to see San Francisco. And do you want to see Oakland and San Francisco, and the bay of all bays on the globe, and the Golden Gate, at a glance, and all together? Then you must go two miles to the northeast and half a mile perpendicular. In short, you must come to The Hights, to the camp where Frémont tented half a century ago, and from which spot he named the now famous Golden Gate, years before gold was found.

Here at dawn we are above the clouds! What would the world do without clouds? And at no two hours of the day, no two minutes, indeed, are the views along here alike. You see the higher streets of San Francisco above the rolling, surging sea-mist; the great cross of the Lone Mountain Cemetery lifting in grand and solemn loneliness above all things, and looking strangely tall and vast. The clouds roll above Oakland, lift, rift a little, and church spires are pointing up and through the sea of snow that undulates, lifts, pulses at your feet. The whole bay is a mobile floor of silver. Not a suggestion of the

sea! Tamalpais, with its winding track and trains above the clouds that conceal San Pablo Bay, a white lighthouse on the headlands below, Black Point, Sutro Heights, Fort Alcatraz, the tips and topmasts of sail, that is all,—

Where phantom ships unchallenged pass
The gloomy guns of Alcatraz.

Twelve o'clock, and not a cloud—not a cloud above or about the peaceful fair visage of beautiful Alameda below you. And yet do not despise the clouds, God's garments' hem. Truly, all that is good or great is veiled, garmented in mist, clouds, mystery. The priest has his sacred place; the house of God has its holy of holies. All things in nature have their mantled mysteries. The little seeds take life in the dark mold; all life begins in secret, silence, majestic mystery, the large solemnity of night.

At morning, noon, or night, especially night, when the heavens and the earth are on fire—for you cannot tell where the lights leave off and the stars begin—the scene is most gorgeously magnificent.

Deep below us lies the valley,
Steep below us lies the town,
Where great sea-ships ride and rally,
And the world walks up and down.

Oh, the sea of lights far-streaming,
When the thousand flags are furled,
And the gleaming bay lies dreaming
As it duplicates the world!

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Pardon me if I answer private letters in this public way. But so much has been said about my "School of Poetry" here, that I cannot very well avoid a note of warning, advice, explanation.

First, then, remember the sweetest flowers grow closest to the ground. This is a deepest lesson. There is no art without heart. The art of all art is really to know nature—yourself. Better to know, of your own knowledge, the color, the perfume, the nature, the twining of a single little creeping vine in the cañon, than to know all the rocky mountains through a book. Man reads too much and reasons too little. Great artists are not great readers, but great observers. They see with the heart. The world seems to think the artist should be constantly busy with book, brush, or pen. No, his heart, like a field, must lie fallow a little to bring forth greatly. And do you know there are poets, great poets, perhaps the very greatest, who never wrote or read a line, and great painters who never knew a brush. A certain man comes here now and then who has a picture-gallery in the cañon, which he says is worth a million. Few, if any, of us have the capacity to see the pictures of this millionaire.

It is high time that the art world and the lesser half of the world should be on terms of better understanding. We of the art world are too apt to think that the rest of the world is heartless. The rest of the world is too apt to think that the art world is headless. The truth is, as said before, a man in trade may be at heart a great artist; while a great artist could in many cases make money, as well as any other man; only he

might be too ready to give it away to some less fortunate than himself.

Another thing let us note by way of finale. Poets, painters, composers, fashioners of beautiful forms, are the gentlest and purest and most temperate of all human beings. Take the poets, especially those of America. Turn on the high white light that beats upon the throne. You will not find a fairer galaxy of names in all history. Even poor Poe, it is now seen, was the victim of envy and malice,—the forty failures assaulting the one success. You also find silly, would-be musicians defaming their betters; and so on all along the line.

It is best that we should get at the truth. A truly great poet can be great in almost anything, as witness King David, Michael Angelo, Milton, and so on.

We are a sort of hillside Bohemia up here, only we have no tape; not even a tow-string, or "strings" of any sort, on any man or any woman. We don't want to know what any one has been or aspires to be, nor are we curious to know what he is. These are matters of his own account with his Maker. We are never numerous; we are never very good, never very bad. We have some rules, or rather some ideas, that we have formulated, melted together, and rounded down, as the years rolled by, but we do not intrude them on anybody, nor are you to believe that we all live up to the best of them; at least, I know one who does not. He sees that man is still heaving a great stone up hill by day to find it rolling back on him at night. Yet he hopes

and believes that the human race grows better and better, while the centuries surge past.

And now, What is taught here, and how, and when? Frankly and truly, nothing, or almost nothing, is taught, and hardly any time is given to the students. It is all in the atmosphere or sense of peace. There simply are three or four tenets or principles of life insisted upon. The first of these is that man is good. This admits of no debate. Sit down a little time as you stumble headlong in the dust up and down the steeps of life,—steeps of your own making or imagining, as a rule,—and wait for the stars, or the moon, or the morning. You will then see that all the world is beautiful, beautiful,—magnificently beautiful. And meantime get a little acquainted with your own soul. You will find that you are better, a great deal better, than you believed as you stumbled so hurriedly and so blindly along in the dust, looking all the time down in the dirt for money. You will also find that those about you are better, vastly better, than you believed.

No debating of any sort is allowed. See what a saving of time! If I could divert the time that is wasted in idle dispute for ten years into a right direction, I could make an Eden in any country. I simply say to my students, "There is not a man or woman with the breath of God in his or her nostrils, who is not good or trying to be good according to the strength and light. It is your privilege and duty, with your better culture and opportunities, to give light and light continually, and not so much by word as by deed;

not by the letter which killeth, but by the spirit which maketh alive."

The truth is, there is a great deal more good in the world than it has credit for. I doubt if there is a home, never so poor, but has some little unseen altar on which is daily, almost hourly, laid some little sweet sacrifice, some little touch of pity and tenderness for the poor pale mother, the weary, worn father, the little sick baby. It is our place to give them more and more love to lay on the unseen altar, more light, more light; so that they may have more heart, hope, strength.

The second lesson after the love of man is the love of nature. As there is no entirely bad man in his right mind on earth, so there is no entirely ugly thing in nature.

And what am I going to do with this domain that has thus grown to be of some interest and importance in the last quarter of a century? Well, there is an orphanage close by. Why not leave it to the little people who have no parents, as a sort of big playground? And then why not leave it to big rich people, who rarely see a tree or landscape except through costly pictures on their parlor walls?

There was a great picture gallery over in the city before the fire. And there was a sign over the gate reading, "No children admitted without their parents." It struck me when I first saw that sign that if I ever got my grounds in perfect condition, I should like to open them to the public, with this sign on the gate-post, "No parents admitted without their children."

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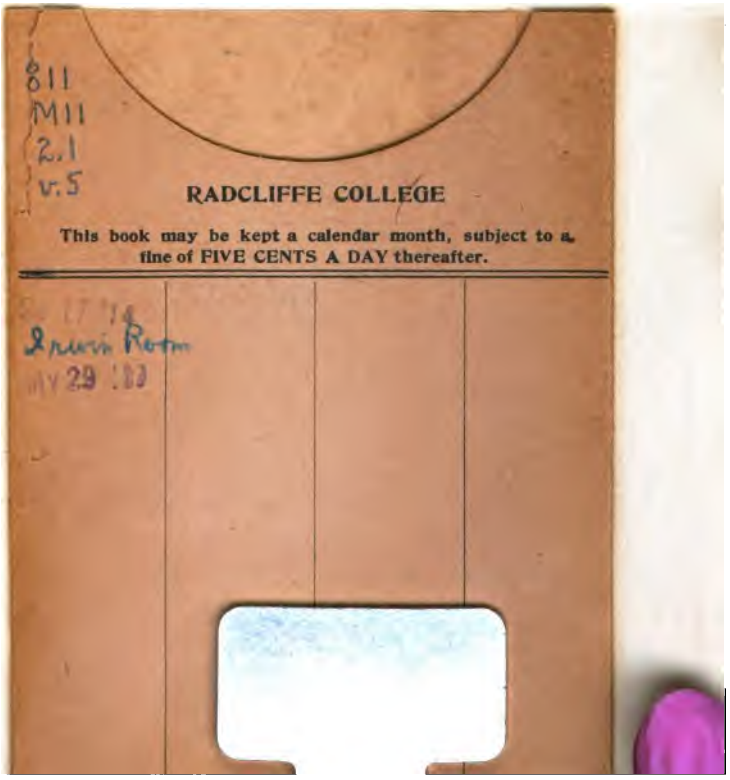
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